

Natural RELIGION Insufficient;

AND

Reveal'd Necessary to MAN's

HAPPINESS

In his present STATE:

OR, A

Rational ENQUIRY into the Principles of the modern *Deists*:
Wherein is largely discovered their utter Insufficiency to answer the
great Ends of Religion, and the Weakness of their Pleadings for
the Sufficiency of Nature's Light to eternal Happiness;

And particularly the Writings of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*, the great
Patron of *Deism*, to wit, His Books *de Veritate*, *de Religione Gen-*
tilium, and his *Religio Laici*, in so far as they assert *Nature's Light*
able to conduct us to future Blessedness, are consider'd, and fully
answer'd:

To which Treatise are annex'd several Essays upon other Subjects.

By the late Reverend Mr. THOMAS HALTBURTON Professor of
Divinity in the University of St. Andrews. *R*

*A Scornor seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not: But Knowledge is easy
unto him that understandeth, Prov. 14. 6.*

*If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be
of GOD, or whether I speak of my self, John 7. 17.*

*Solis nōsse Deos & Cæli Numina vobis,
Aut solis nescire, datum. Lucan. de Druid.*

EDINBURGH,

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APPENDIX



EDWARD R. G. E.
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PREFACE.

THE GOD of Glory hath not left Himself without a Witness; all His Works do, after their Manner, declare His Glory. Ask now the Beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the Earth, and it shall teach thee; and the Fishes of the Sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the Hand of the LORD hath wrought this? *Job 12. 7, 8, 9.* Moreover it hath pleased him to instamp upon the Consciences of Men, such deep Impressions of His Being, and Glory, that all the Powers and Subtility of Hell, shall never be able to eradicate them: Though, alas, through a Custom of Sin, and especially against much Light and Conviction, the Consciences of many are debauched in these Dregs of Time to an obliterating of these Impressions which otherwise would have been strong and vivid. The Principles of Moral Equity carry such an Evidence in their Nature, and are also accompanied with so much of binding Force upon the Conscience, that their Obligation on rational Creatures, hath a most resplendent Clearness, and fills the little World with such a Strength, and Efficacy of Truth, as far surpasseth the plainest Theoretical Principles. That one Maxim, *Matth. 7. 12.* *Luke 6. 3.* Therefore all Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them. That one Maxim, I say, (to pass others) was Matter of so much Wonder to some of the most polite Heathens, as they knew not well how to express their Sense of the Truth and Glory of it; they thought it worthy to be engraven with Letters of Gold, upon the Frontispieces of their most magnificent Structures; an agreeable and beaking Evidence of its having been imprinted in some Measure upon their Hearts. Nevertheless all these, tho' sweet, strong and convincing Notices of a Deity, do yet vanish as faint Glimmerings, when compared to that Stamp of Divine Authority, which our Great, and alone Law-giver has deeply imprinted upon the Scriptures of Truth, *Psal. 19. 7.* The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the LORD.

P R E F A C E.

LORD is sure, making Wise the Simple, &c. I enter not upon this large Theme which great Men have treated to excellent Purpose, I only represent very shortly, That the stupendious Account we have in these Scriptures of moral Equity in its full Compass, comprized even in ten Words, that wonderful Account, I say, proclaimeth its Author with so much of convincing Evidence, and such Strains of Glory, as I cannot possibly clothe with Words. The greatest Men among the Heathenish Nations have given the highest Accounts of their Accomplishments by framing of Laws, but besides the passing Weakness of their Performances, when viewed in a true Light, the choicest of them all have a great Deal of Iniquity inlaid with them: But all here shineth with the Glory of a Deity. Every Duty is plainly contained within these small Boundaries, and all Concerns thereof in Heart and Way, are set down so punctually, and so fully cleared in the Exposition which the Lawgiver himself has given of his own Laws, that nothing is wanting. Here also are all the Mysteries of Iniquity in the Heart so clearly and fully detected, these Evils also pursued to their most latent Sources, and the grand Spring of them all, viz. The Corruption of our Nature, and in so very few Words, with so much of shining Evidence and Power, that no judicious and sober Person can deny that the Finger of GOD is there, unless he offer the most daring Violence to his own Conscience. And what shall I say of the glorious Contrivance of Salvation, through the LORD JESUS our only Redeemer? Should I touch at the ground Work thereof in the eternal Counsel of the adorable Trinity, and the several Displays of it, until at Length the compleat Purchase was made in the Fulness of Time, and if I should but glance at the several Strokes of omnipotent Power, and rich Mercy through CHRIST, by which the purchased Salvation is effectually applied to every Elect Person, I would enter upon a Field from which I could not quickly or easily get off. All that I adventure to say is, The Discoveries of a Deity in each Step thereof are so relucant and full of Glory, that the Being of this material Light under a meridian Sun, without the Interposition of a Cloud, may as well be denied, as these great Truths can be disowned. Beyond all Manner of Doubt, they contain Matter of much higher, and glorious Evidence upon the Minds of all those whose Eyes the God of this World hath not blinded, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. John 1. 5. Deut. 29. 4. Tet ah! midday Clearness is midnight Darkness to these who have not Eyes. But not to insist. If we add to all these the full History of the Heart of Man in all the Depths of Wickedness contained in that great Abyss, together with the several Eruptions thereof, both open and violent, as also subtle and covered, together with all the Engines of Temptations for setting it to Work, and keeping it still busie: If, I say, the perfect

Account

P R E F A C E.

Account of these Things which is given in the Word be seriously pondered, who can escape the Conviction, That He, and He only who formed the Spirit of Man within him could have given such a Display. From all this I would bewail, were it possible, with Tears of Blood, the blasphemous Wickedness of these who from the grossest Darknes and Ignorance, oppose, malign, and deride such great and high Things. But it is enough, Wisdom is justified of all her Children, Matth. 11. 19. The worthy and now glorified Author of this Work had a plentiful Measure, beyond many, of the surest and sweetest Knowledge of these Matters: His Soul ('may I so express it) was cast into the blessed Mould of Gospel Truth. Who is a Teacher like unto GOD! Sure an inlightning Work by his Word and Spirit upon the Soul filleth it with Evidence of a more excellent Nature, and attended with a Penetrancy quite of another Kind, than any mathematical Demonstration can amount to. In this Case the Soul, 2 Cor. 3. 3. is an Epistle of Jesus Christ, wherein these great Truths are written by himself in Characters which the united Force and Subtilities of Hell shall be so far from deleting, that their strongest Efforts shall render the Impression still deeper, and more vivid. No mathematical Demonstration can vie with this: Forasmuch as the Authority of the GOD of Truth, that conveys his own Testimony into the Heart, with a strong Hand, has a Glory and Evidence peculiar to it self. And tho' well known to these who enjoy it, yet of a Beauty great and mysterious, such as the Tongues of Men and Angels could not suffice to describe. The empty Cavills of that execrable Herd of blasphemous Atheists, or Deists, as they would be called, amount to a very small, and contemptible Account, seeing the most subtile of them, fall very far short of these Objections, unclean Spirits propose, and urge in a Way of Temptation against Persons exercised to Godliness, which yet the Father of Lights dispelleth mercifully from Time to Time, and maketh these dark Shades to vanish, as the Sun of Righteousness ariseth upon the Soul, with a Glory and Evidence still upon the Ascendant, Mal. 4. 2. Prov. 4. 18. Hos. 6. 3. Nevertheless the learned and godly Author hath encountered these silly Creatures at their own Weapons, both offensively and defensively, and to such excellent Purpose as needeth not my poor Testimony: He hath searched into the very Bottom of what they alledge, with great and unwearied Diligence, he did read their Writings carefully from the very first Springs, and hath represented fairly their empty Cavills, in all the Shadows of Strength they can be alledged to have, and has refuted them plainly and copiously. On which and the like Accounts, I hope, the Work shall be, through the Divine Blessing, of great Use in the Churches of CHRIST.

JA. HOG.

E P I S T L E

O F

Recommendation.

MAny learned and zealous Asserters of the Truth of reveal'd Religion have worthily employed their Time and Talents in Defence of Christianity, against the cavilling Assaults of the bold Infidels of the present Age. The pious and worthy Author of this Treatise against Deism thought meet to alter the usual Method of Management, by carrying an offensive War into the Enemies Territories: And hath successfully attacked the strongest Forts of the Deists Principles, by shewing their utter Insufficiency to guide us unto eternal Happiness. Hereunto is added a Treatise of the Reason of Faith, for establishing the Belief of revealed Religion upon its true and proper Basis. We therefore wishing and hoping, That these posthumous Labours of the Reverend Author may, through the blessing of GOD, prove useful and profitable for promoting and confirming the serious and unbyassed Reader in the true Christian Faith, do earnestly recommend to him the diligent Perusal of them, and him in using of them, to the Grace of GOD for that Effect.

WILLIAM CARSTARES.

WILL. WISHEART.

JAMES HADOW.

THOMAS BLACK.

WILLIAM HAMILTON.

JAMES GRIERSON.

JOHN FLEMING.

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ORATIO INAUGURALIS

HABITA

ANDREAPOLI,

In Scholis Collegii *Mariani* Borealibus, quinto Calendas *Maii*, 1710.

In qua, post exhibitam Rationem suscepti Muneris,
Examinatur Scheda nupera, cui Titulus,

EPISTOLA

Archimedis ad Regem Gelonem

Alba Græca Reperta, Anno *Æræ Christianæ* 1688.

A. PITCARNIO, M. D. ut vulgo creditur,
Auctore.

EDINBURGI,

Excudebant *Andree Anderson* Hæredes & Successores
Typographi, Anno *DOM. M.DCC.XIV.*



ORATIO INAUGURALIS.

*Magnifice Domine, Rector Collegii Leonardini
Præfecte, Reverendissime, Doctissime.*

*Collegii Mariani Præfecte, Reverendissime, Eru-
ditissime, Collega Conjunctissime, Colendissime.*

*Salvatoriani Collegii Præposite, Honorande,
Eurditissime.*

*Civitatis Andreanæ Pastoris Reverendissimi,
Vigilantissimi.*

Facultatis Artium Decane Facundissime.

*Artium Liberalium, Matheſios & Linguarum Pro-
fessores Ingenioſiſſimi, Literatiſſimi.*

*Leſtiſſima Juvenum Theologiæ præſertim Sudioſa
Corona.*

Auditores quotquot adestis Spectatiſſimi.

§. I.  IREMINEI forſan, qui ego
Suggeſtum hoc, Profeſ-
ſionem auſpicaturus The-
ologicam, conſcendere
audeam; quâve Ratione, qui non ita pridem,
hic Diſcipulorum occupâram Sedem, ſubito
Doſtorum aſcendam Cathedram; quo Con-
filio,

I.
Objectionis
contra præ-
ſens Inſtitu-
tum Occupa-
tio. Ad quam
diluendam

filio, qui per bina, plus minus, Annorum Lustra, neglecto academicæ Literaturæ Studio, ut & Linguarum, quibus utuntur docti, rudi Plebeculæ prima Religionis Christianæ Elementa instillare, inculcare Sermone vernaculo, plano & incompto, privatim & publice, repetitis Conatibus pro Modulo enitebar, statim in Doctorum Cœtu, Lingua etiam per multos retro Annos inassueta, Verba factururus appaream.

II.

Vitæ prioris & Studiorum Ratio breviter exponitur.

§. II. Familiarem quidem illam, quâ hætenus usus sum, docendi Methodum exigebat Status Gregis mihi commissæ, Doctrinæ Natura, & Scopus, & meum Officium. Optimum magni Lutheri Monitum, *Qui populariter, trivialiter & pueriliter docet, optimè docet*, semper magni faciebam, & etiamnum faciam, in hoc præcipue intentus, *ut Christum crucifixum ipse cognoscam*, & aliis cognoscendum exhibeam *καθ' ὑποχρὴν λόγῳ ἢ σοφίᾳ* & studiose evitatis *πειθῆς ἀνθρώπων σοφίας λόγοις ἵνα μὴ κεκαθῇ ὁ σαυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. Hanc inquam, agendi Rationem necessariam facile negabit nemo Christianus, & mihi magis accommodam fatebuntur, qui me norunt; Instituti autem præsentis, a priore tam diversi, Rationes multis, nullus dubito, minus videbuntur evidentes.

§. III. Ut

Oratio Inauguralis.

5

§. III. Ut Consilii mei Rationes vobis impertiar, suadet Officium, persuadet quam cum dignissimis illustrissimæ hujus Societatis Membris exculturus sum, aperta & minime fucata Amicitia, Observantia. Quid Rei igitur sit quod Munus a mea vivendi Ratione, Educatione, Genio, quin & Inclinatione tam remotum, nunc aggrediar, vultis dicam? Dicam apertè, familiariter, ingenuè at breviter.

III.
Hinc Progressus fit ad Rationes mutati Muneris.

Numen Clementissimum, cui me totum debeo, ante undecim Annos, a privatis avocatum Studiis, utut indignissimum & reluctantem, gloriosissimo Evangelio unigeniti sui Filii separavit, & quo meos quantuloscunque Labores collocarem, gratiose monstravit, in quo Munere, licet inter Populum amantissimum amatissimum *ἐν ἀδελφείᾳ καὶ ἐν φιλίᾳ καὶ ἐν ᾗ ἡμεῖς ποιεῖμεν* hætenus versatus sum.

§. IV. Et in hac Statione, de eo, quod aggredior, Munere aut id genus alio, ne per Somnium cogitans, summa Delectatione hæsi, etiamnum & hæsurus, nisi, quod prius aperuerat Ostium, occlusisset iterum divina Providentia, hoc solo aperto, quod jam ingredior

IV.
Prius non derelictum Munus quod ejus me tædium coeperit, sed quod hujus Officii suscipiendi Necessitas imponeretur.

ingredior non sine Tremore, Viam monstret, licet Serenissimæ Reginae Nominatio, Muneris Susceptionem urgeat, quamvis Synodus Provincialis Auctoritas, cujus Decreto, iis præsertim quibus comitabatur Circumstantiis, vestito, refragari mihi Religio est.

V.

Difficultates
variae Suscep-
tum dissuaden-
tes.

§. V. Quæ quidem ardui hujus Muneris Susceptionem dissuaderent plurima primo occurrebant Intuitu, meæ præsertim Tenuitatis Conscientia: Utpote qui non Sermone tantum, sed & Cognitione rudis sim. In omni autem Suscepto prius videndum, *quid ferant Humeri quid ferre recusent.* Nec ita Domi Hospes sum, ut penitus ignorem *quam sit mihi curta Suppellex.*

VI.

Quare, his
non obstanti-
bus, illud sus-
ceperim Ratio
primaria,

§. VI. Quum vero me, Vitamque meam, & quicquid sum, Christo & Evangelio dudum devoveram, & quod devotum est sine summa Impietate alienari non possit, aliis iisdem inserviendi præclusis Viis, dominici illius Mandati Vi, *Negotiamini donec veniam,* obstrictus teneor, nec minus hoc, quantumvis gravissimum, effugere mihi integrum est. Unicam, eamque minutissimam, si suscepti
Officii

Officii Ratio habeatur, Minam mihi commissam fateor lubentissime, quantumvis autem minutula occupanda est, ne cum venerit Dominus otiosus inveniar.

§. VII. Et hoc in arduo Instituto præcipuum est Solatium mihi, Rem esse cum Domino Clementissimo, qui exaltatus Dona recepit rebellibus etiam impertienda, quibus apti reddantur iis, ad quæ vocat exequendis Officiis. *Spiritus quidem est in Mortali, ast Omnipotentis Afflatus in Rebus præsertim divinis intelligentes reddit, observante Elihu apud Jobum.* Non itaque hoc in me fuscipio Munus, quod Oneri huic sustinendo Humeros meos aptos credam, sed quia is, qui me non cupientem, ne cogitantem, immo reluctan-tem, Necessitate quasi impositâ, ad id vocavit, is sit DEUS Fortis, Sapientissimus & Sufficientissimus, qui in Maximis Minimis sæpe utitur, & vel ex Infantulorum Ore fundatam disponit Laudem, & Robur fundat suum, propter Hostes ad compefcendum Inimicum & Ultorem sui, Psal. 8. 3. Frustra igitur dicerem, *Puerulus sum, loqui non possam, quum is, qui Hominis formaverat Os & Animam, hoc*
vetuerit :

VII.

Quæ contra istas & alias omnes Difficultates mihi Solatio sunt & Mentem confirmant. Concluditur Introductio.

Oratio Inauguralis.

vetuerit : Et facile Sapientiam, Elocutionem, quoad Muneri huic, Modo per Jesum Christum non prorsus inaccepto, exequendo necessariae sunt, largiri possit : Si meis vivendum, in in hac nova Provincia, esset Sumptibus, in ipso profecto Limine hæsissem desperabundus; at Dominus noster Neminem suorum propriis jubet militare Stipendiis, sed quod exigit, gratiosè subministrat, & Conatus obedientiales, quantumvis imbecillos, non aspernatur, multis & variis Fidei confirmandæ interpositis Promissis. Ejus itaque Sapientiâ, Misericordiâ, & Fidelitate, efficaci Christi Mediatione & Spiritu fretus, vestræ etiam Benevolentiae Spe sublevatus, quam nactus sum, *Spartam* pro Virili adornare conabor. Magnorum, qui mihi præcesserunt, Nominum animatus Exemplo, & eorum insistens Vestigiis, licet non Passibus æquis : *In Magnis voluisse*, parvulo præsertim, si non ut vulgare fert Proverbium, *sat est* : Aliquid tamen est, & quod Dominus noster, pro ea, qua affectus est erga nos Misericordia, se non aspernaturum promittit. Et sic de Instituti Ratione, καὶ ταῦτα μὲν εἰς ταῦτα.

VIII.

Ad Orationis Subjectum transitur Deploratiōe de Scepticismi in Religione Prævalentia.

§. VIII. De quo vero, apud vos, Auditores spectatissimi, prima hac Vice, agerem Subiecto, dubius aliquamdiu hæsi; inspicienti autem, prout sæpius soleo, non sine summo Mœrore, in deterius vergens Seculum, illud occurrebat Psaltis, *Si destruantur Fundamenta, quid facit aut faciet justus?* Si labefactata concidant Religionis Fundamina, quod apertè, cheu, hodie moliuntur plurimi, næ illi, qui eidem Vitam devoverunt suam, egregie, belle fecerunt! Hujuscemodi autem Suppositio sine gravi Offensione Generationis Filiorum *JEHOVÆ*, vix quidem nominari potest. Quid igitur dicemus de misero hoc nostro Seculo, cui non immerito, quod de *Scoto* lepide olim ingeniosus dicebat *Italus*, inscribi potest,

*Quæcunque humani fuerant, Jurisque sacrati,
In Dubium veniunt cuncta, vocante Scoto.*

Merito etiam, Auditores, vereri potest & debet, ne *DEUS* Justissimus Impietatem Seculi rependat, Fato non dissimili illi, quod sequentibus false & graphice depingit idem Epigramma.

¶ ¶

Quid

Oratio Inauguralis.

*Quid quod & indubium illius sit Vita vocata,
Morte illum simili, ludificante Strophæ,
Quum non ante Virum Vita jugularit adempta,
Quam vivus Tumulo conditus ille foret.*

IX.

*Domestica
ejus Instantia
est Schedula
nuper emissa.*

§. IX. Dum hæc & alia serio Animo
volverem, Oculos forte conjeci in Schedulam
non ita pridem, hac in Gente clanculum
impressam, cui Titulus Epistola Archimedis ad
Regem Gelonem, Albæ Græcæ reperta, Anno
Æræ Christianæ 1688.

X.

*Quæ exami-
nanda pro-
ponitur, &
quare.*

§. X. Non itaq me abs Re, aut quod a mea
alienum esset Professione, facturum judicavi,
si larvati hujus Religionis Revelatæ Hostis
retunderem Impetum; cum pro comperto
haberem, Schedulam hanc, ut alia taceam,
Juventuti melioris præsertim Sortis & Indolis,
in prævalentem *Deismum*, præcipitandæ desti-
natam & sedulo distributam esse.

XI.

*Defectus
Candoris in
hujus Generis
Scriptoribus
notatur.*

§. XI. Sæpius mecum cogitabam, si non
mage pias, minus saltem impias & genero-
siores multo, cum nostra Religione Inimi-
citas agere *Judeos*, *Mahomedanos*, *Gentiles*,
qui aperto eam adoriuntur Marte, quam qui
inter

Oratio Inauguralis.

II

inter nos degentes, & Christianum præ se ferentes Nomen, quam Ore tenus profitentur, Religionem furtivis hisce Conatibus destructum eunt; Juventuti inermi & incautæ, quæ, fallaci, eheu! Acuminis Specie & lepide Dictis, quam subacta judicii Soliditate plerumque magis delectatur, hoc Modo imponentes.

§. XII. Veniam dabit, Auditores, *Philomathematici* præsertim eruditissimi, si *Revelatam* vindicaturus *Religionem* contra impotentem *Pseudo-mathematici* Impetum, venerandi utut *Archimedis* Nomine velati, in alienam Messem Falcem immittam.

XII.

Pro Falce in alienam Messem, Specie tenus, immissa, Apologia.

§. XIII. *Satyram* satyricæ non exagitare *difficillimum*: Justam vero cohibet Indignationem, illustri huic Cœtui debita Reverentia; nec parum mecum valuit aureum illud, divinum fere dixerim, ingeniosissimi *Claudiani* Monitum,

XIII.

Licet severe tractari mereatur Auctor, placida & modesta Examinatio intenditur.

*Lene fluit Nilus, sed cunctis Annibus extat
Utilior, nullas confusus Murmure Vires,
Acrior ac rapidus tacitas prætermeat ingens
Danubius Ripas. Eadem Clementia sani*

¶ ¶ 2

Gurgitis

Oratio Inauguralis.

*Gurgitis immensum diducit in Ostia Gangen.
 Torrentes immane fremant, lassisque minentur
 Pontibus, involvant spumoso Vortice Sylvas.
 Pax majora decet, peragit tranquilla Potestas
 Quod Violentia nequit; Mandataque fortius urget
 Imperiosa Quies*—————

Placide, pacate igitur agam, & Personis
 parcens, de Vitiis dicam, & breviter.

Fictas historicas Circumstantias, Fabulæ
 necessarias non moror, quæ ex *Archytæ* nescio
 cujus Medici Græci, aut Græcum simu-
 lantis Observationibus Anatomicis, aut
 Mathesi pro divina adfert Existencia, si sin-
 cero adferantur Animo, grati accipimus;
 Diçteria hic & alibi Insinuatione sparsa tacitus
 prætereo, summa tantum sequar Fastigia
 Rerum.

XIV.
 Auctoris
 Scopus exqui-
 ritur.

§. XIV. Auctoris ante omnia, & Scripti
 Scopus quis sit, videndum. Quid sibi
 velit fictus hic *Archimedes* ex Pagina octava
 sub Finem, hariolari facillimum est. Chri-
 stianam quidem Religionem nominatim
 non aggreditur, licet in eam præcipue hanc
 fabricatam Machinam, sine Charitatis Dis-
 pendio affirmari possit.

§. XV. Post-

§. XV. Postquam autem Loco supra
 memorato Religionem omnem particularem,
 nullo habito Discrimine, venerando *Secta*
 Nomine indigitasset, duo præcipue in omni
Secta considerata monet, *Secta* scil. *Pro-*
pria & *Communia*: *Propria* ea sunt quibus una
 ab alia distinguitur *Secta*; *Communia* vero
 quæ omnibus *Sectis* sunt communia, univer-
 salia, scil. illa *Iusti* & *Æqui* Axiomata,
 cuiusmodi est illud, *Quod tibi fieri non*
vis, alteri ne feceris, & quæ inde fluunt simi-
 lia.

XV.

Auctoris in
 hunc Finem
 Verba notan-
 tur.

§. XVI. De Communibus illis quæ sola
 Necessaria & Utilia deprædicat Author,
 Bona an sint Controversia nulla; Utilia,
 Necessaria & Optima haud inviti fate-
 mur.

XVI.

Quid in his
 incontrover-
 sum sit.

§. XVII. Merito tamen quæri potest, An
 mera materialis, ut loquuntur Scholæ, ha-
 rum Regularum Observatio, nullo habito
 Respectu Gloriæ Divinæ, Religionis Finis
 ultimi, aut Auctoritatis summi Legislatoris,
 quæ omnis Obedientiæ, proprie sic dictæ,
 Ratio formalis indubie existat; ut alia præ-
 teream,

XVII.

Cautio ne-
 cessaria Con-
 cessione sub-
 jungitur.

teream, merito, inquam, controverti potest, an talis Observatio Legum naturalium *Obedientia* dici mereatur, Deo accepta, aut Observantibus ad Felicitatem æternam utilis esse possit.

XVIII.

Hujus & superiorum Auctorum de Religione tractantium *Officiantia* notatur.

§. XVIII. Et ut hoc obiter moneam, attendenti cuivis obvium est, quam contortæ, ne dicam ridiculæ sint hujuscemodi de *Religione* Disquisitiones, nullâ vel semel injectâ *Finis ultimi* Mentione. *Religio Medium est*, de *Medio* autem, nisi *Respectus ad Finem* habeatur, Judicium ferre solidum impossibile est. In tota autem hac Dissertatiuncula ad alium *Religionis Finem*, nisi forsan ad eam *Morum Coercionem* quæ *Vitæ civilis Utilitati* inserviat, *Respectus* habeatur nullus: De *Acceptatione nostra apud DEUM*, æterna Felicitate, & *Gloria summi Numinis*, altum ubique *Silentium*.

XIX.

Auctoris de propriis omnium Religionum particularium Determinatio & ejusdem Confirmatio.

§. XIX. Propria quod attinet quasi ex Tripode pronunciat. *Observationes & Historias omnium Gentium demonstrare*, N. B. non una magis quam alia Secta, *Homines esse factos meliores* (etiam quam sunt ii qui nulli Sectæ inserviunt) neque *Fructum aliquem in Communibus* per-

perceptum ex admissis Propriis----- neque aliter fieri posse---- quum illi Religionis Auctores, sive Fautores, Sacerdotes, Haruspices, &c. hoc est, qui Sectæ Propria invenerunt, eamque considerunt, de Propriis quam de Communibus magis semper solliciti sunt.

Hæc confirmat Author, Romanæ Sectæ a Numa institutæ Exemplo; & Romanos post institutam a Numa Religionem, meliores non fuisse quam antea fuerant, nec Numam, Jussu Nymphæ Ægeriæ, Communia mandantem, iis Vim ullam addidisse obligatricem, quam prius non habuerant.

§. XX. Hæ sunt illæ Demonstrationes, quas Geometricis similes Studiis haud vulgaribus excultas, & quæ sufficere possunt Hominibus cordatis, pro ea qua est Modestia, fictus hic jactat Archimedes.

XX.
Auctoris
Jactantia nota.

§. XXI. Uno ut dicam Verbo, *ἕως* hic *ἄχρις*, sanum plane nihil est. Postulatum, cui tota innititur Moles, falsum est, Fidei Historiarum, & certissimæ contrarium Experientiae.

XXI.

Hæc Auctoris Dictata Suppositioni falsæ superstruuntur, quod fusc probatur Respectu Christianæ Religionis.

Quis etenim non novit, qui hæc nosse curat, quod non citius per Orbem Terrarum

pro-

propagata & recepta fuit *Religio Christiana*, quam cæteris annumerat Sectis, quin statim Homines innumeri, qui vilia fuerant Peccati Mancipia, Legesque illas communes susque deque habuerant, relictis Peccatis, Legibus prius contemptis, sinceram, rationalem, voluntariam, imo spirituales ex Corde, non sine summa Delectatione, Authoritatis Divini Legislatoris Reverentiâ præcipue ducti, Obedientiam præstiterunt?

Nec defuerunt alii non pauci, qui umbratilem Virtutis Speciem vanæ Glorioræ Spe, aut id Genus aliis moti Illecebris, sectati fuerant, qui jam Christianæ *ἡς τοῦ πνεύματος διδασκῆς* traditi, rejecta Umbra, veram & minime fucatam Sanctitatem, Justitiam & Pietatem coluerunt, in Gloriam *JEHOVÆ* tanquam Finem & Scopum ultimum collimante. Hæc notiora sunt, Auditores, quam ut Probatione indigeant.

XXII.
Quod pro suo
Pronunciato
adfert Argu-
mentum non
concludit.

§. XXII. Quod de ea, quam introduxit *Numa Pompilius*, Dea, ut pertendebat, *Ægerie* Monitu, Religione aut Superstitione potius allegat Autor, inconcludens est. In Inductionibus ex uno Exemplo, nisi subsumatur eandem esse reliquorum Conditionem, nihil

nihil concludi, Lippis, quod aiunt, & Tonforibus notum est.

Præterea, concedatur Authori in omni falsa Religione Propria Communibus Vim nullam addere posse, attamen nisi particulares omnes Religiones aut Sectas falsas esse demonstraverit, ne Hilum quidem proficiet.

§. XXIII. Quod de *majori Fautorum Religionum particularium de Propriis quam Communibus Sollicitudine* adfert, id pro solita dictum est Charitate, & si eo, quem intendere videtur Autor, Sensu accipiatur, quod scil. Religionis V. G. Christianæ Fautores omnia Communia negligent, aut serio non inculcent, Propria solummodo urgentes, falsissimum est. Utinam, qui se nulli inservire Sectæ & Communibus contentos esse jactant, æque Justi Bonique tenaces essent.

XXIII.

Obiter ipsarum
Insinuationes
examinantur.

Si dicat, Autores *Sectarum*, licet Communia non prorsus negligent, de Propriis tamen magis esse sollicitos, cuivis Christiano, quod reponat, in promptu est, Neminem, scil. Communibus illis eam præstare posse Obedientiam qua glorificetur DEUS, quæ DEO accepta & Saluti æternæ utilis sit, si

¶ ¶ ¶

non

non admittantur quæ Christianæ Religioni Propria sunt.

Hiscē debemus Cordis illam Renovationem, sine qua Nemo DEO inservire potest, Spiritus Gratiae Communicationes, Remissionem Peccatorum, Acceptationem cum DEO, Vitam denique æternam, & quæ eidem obtinendæ necessaria sunt Omnia.

Quam hæc sint Utilia, imo plane Necessaria, non est quod Pluribus ostendam.

XXIV.
Ulterius
hinc ostenditur
Auctoris
Scopus.

§. XXIV. Hæc sunt, Auditores, quæ, si quicquam valeat *Archimedis* Judicium, cordatos omnes illicere possunt, ut ab omni se abstineant *Seçta*. Quis sit Auctoris Scopus jam videtis, *Hoc* *Ithacus* velit, & magno mercentur *Atridæ*. Veritus autem Autor, ne obesæ naris Lectoribus, quæ hætenus protulit, convincendis non sufficiant, *Theorema* ex superabundanti profert Geometricum, quod maxime Incredulos etiam nolentes, & Plumbeos convincat. Audiamus, sic itaque se habet.

XXV.
Auctoris
Theorema
proponitur.

§. XXV. Postulat sibi duas exhiberi *Seçtas*. *Æquum* est Postulatum; quod vis, factum est; *Christianam* & *Mahomedanam* exhibemus; procedat *Theorema*. Cre-

Credibilitatis Quantitas, sive quantum hoc est Fidei quod primæ Sectæ Propriis convenit, eam habet Rationem ad id quantum est Fidei, sive Credibilitatis, eam Quantitatem quæ Propriis secundæ convenit, quam habet Numeris Auctorum sive Testium, qui Propria primæ primi prodidere ad Numerum Testium secundæ similitum.

Et Fides (de Quantitate sive Magnitudine semper loquor, quam solam Geometra rimatur) quæ debet adhiberi Propriis Sectæ, fert eam Rationem ad Fidem quæ Communibus adhiberi debet, quam fert Rationem illorum Numerus, qui Propria primi prodidere ad Numerum Generis humani Communia excolentem.

§. XXVI. Geometricum saltem Sonum agnoscite, Auditores, an vero Propositionum Geometricarum Vis convictrix subsist, si non magni esset. Syracusii Senis Autoritas, merito forte dubitari possit.

XXVI.

Quam vanum sit hoc Theorema ostenditur suse.

Quod autem sibi velint depericium Verborum Tendiculæ Incautis inescandis Artificio adhibitæ breviter dicam. Huc Res tota redit,

Probabilitas Religionis cujuslibet commensuratur Numero eandem asserentium Testium. Religio quam profitentur plurimi mage probabilis est,

¶ ¶ ¶ 2

quam

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quam sectantur pauciores minus est credibilis.

Communia universum Genus humanum agnoscit ; Propria Sectæ cujusvis comparative paucos habet Authores, Assertores, Testes, adeoque multo minus credibilia sunt, quam sunt Communia.

Ex Clava Herculem, en mirum illud Theorema ! Et si Populus vult decipi, decipiatur. Sed serio agamus.

Si de solo Hominum Testimonio Sermo sit, vera profecto Theorematis Pars neutra est : Extendatur ulterius, Impietate non carebit. Quis etenim est Mortalium cui de meliori Luto finxit Præcordia Numen, qui non novit, quod ne Tyrones quidem latet, non unice Testium Numerum, sed eorundem Qualitates & Testimonii Circumstantias Credibilitatem intendere aut minuere ?

Et si debita instituatur Comparatio inter Propria Christianæ Religionis & Communia, de quibus Autor, præcise quatenus Hominum nituntur Testimoniis, non veremur asserere Testimonia Autorum & Fautorum Christianæ Religionis, iis, quibus comitabantur, Circumstantiis vestita, non minus, ne dicam magis, credibilia esse, quam sunt Testimonia reliquorum Hominum, qui Christiani non sunt, pro
com-

Communibus illis, si solis humanis agendum esset Testimoniis.

Sed Communia illa, quum in Relatione mutua DEUM inter & Homines fundentur, firmiori innituntur Fundamento, quam est Hominum quorumvis Authoritas.

Et Fides, quam sanctæ nostræ Religioni debemus, & adhibemus, non Hominum Testimonio, Argumentationibus aut Eloquio nititur, sed in Potentia & Virtute consistit Divina, ut cum Apostolo loquar, hoc est, Numinis veracissimi Testimonio convictrici, nativa & sibi propria Luce Mentem illuminanti, & de ipsius divina Origine certiorant innixa, stat nullo mobilis Ævo.

Ut itaque ad Hominum, ut vult Autor, paucissimorum Authoritatem Rem totam deferamus, Ratio nulla est; quod hoc supposuerit Autor non miror, quum sit Genus Hominum qui ὅσα μὴ ἐκ οὐδενὸς βλασφημῶσιν, an quod eodem Commate Apostolus addit, hic addi debeat, judicent alii, judicabit subito venturus Dominus. Theorematis Demonstrationem si expectaveritis, frustrabimini, Auditores. Regi Geloni, sequentibus hæc demandata est Provincia.

Jud. Epist.
Com. 10.

ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τα αλη-
γὰ ζωὰ ἐπίστα-
ται ἐν τῇ τῆς
φθίονται.

XXVII.

Principium
ex quo De-
monstratio
precedentis
Theorematis
perenda pro-
ponitur, & fal-
sitatis argui-
tur.

§. XXVII. Facile Theorema nostrum demon-
straveris, Rex Gelo, postquam te monuero, parem
adsumi omnium ubique Testantium de Propriis
Veracitatem: Quippe parem ubique Fidem apud
suos Autores invenere, qui omnes primæ Sectæ
sue Conditoribus, tanquam Viris integerrimis &
scientissimis, credidere.

Parem quidem ubique esse Testantium
Fidem, gratis adsumi in aperto est: Sed
cum hic Rei Cardo vertatur, adsumi non
debit, sed demonstrari; quod parem apud
suos quique Fidem obtinuerunt, Argumentum
est magno vix dignum Archimede.

Qui Christianæ Religionis Veritatem Argu-
mentis historicis demonstrarunt plurimi,
olim & nostra Ætate non gratis adsumunt
Testes, quorum utuntur Testimonio, Viros
integerrimos, quod Fidem apud suos obti-
nuerant; sed probant ex Principiis certissimis,
& quæ apud omnes sunt in confesso, eos
revera tales fuisse, additis insuper innumeris
Testimonii Circumstantiis, quæ ejusdem
Veritatem fortiter adstruant.

XXVIII.

Insinuatio-
nes quædam
notatæ.

§. XXVIII. Quorsum vero hæc omina
tendant, nimis profecto evidens est. Larva-
tus hic Religionis Hostis hoc vult, Fidem
Religionis

Religionis cujuslibet solo Hominum Testimonio
 niti, & illud etiam Testimonium Fallaciae merito
 suspicari posse, quod satis insinuat Narratione
 de Romuli in Cœlum Raptu. An autem
 hæc Autor solummodo intenderit, ut fabulo-
 sam hanc Translationem suspectæ reddat
 Fidei, non perinde clarum est.

In Resur-
 rectionem. &
 Adscensionem
 CHRISTI.

Observat insuper Autor alia esse quæ
 Testimoniorum Vires superant, quæ admitti
 non debent, quibuscunque suffulciantur
 Testimoniis.

Quid autem sibi velit *ridicula*, quam sub-
 jungit, Suppositio de *Hannibale*, qui tres Duces
 diversos, unus in se haberet, & Romanos
 tribus Pugnis eodem Tempore, sed diversis
 in Locis, superasset: Quid, inquam, sibi
 velit, nisi hæc in sacrosanctam Trinitatem
 adornata sit Illustratio, intelligere facile non
 est.

In Trinita-
 tem.

Unicum superest affine authoris Problema,
 sic itaque se habet.

*Datis Sectæ Propriis verum Sectæ Autorem
 invenire, sive definire quis qualisve fuerit.*
 Quæ in Illustratione hujus Problematis
 Religioni revelatæ injuria hic & alibi sparsim
 insinuat, quum supponantur, non probentur,
 tacitus prætereo.

Autorem

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Autorem itaque ad Problematis Solutionem properantem sequamur. Sic igitur inquit, *Ad Problematis Solutionem accedimus.*

Solutionem ergo, Auditores, expectate magno dignam *Archimede* appositam, expectate quoque Replicationem, ast monet Autor vel Editor,

Cætera desiderantur.

Spe igitur excidistis semel, & quam excitat Spem, ludificat: Quum itaque moneat Sapiens, *Quod deficit non posse numerari.*

Desideratur quoque Replicatio.

Bis ludificamini, Auditores spectatissimi, & que institui cœpit *Amphora*, currente *Rota*, *Urceus* exit.

Dixi.

TO THE
READER.

R E A D E R,

WHoever thou art, the Question agitate in the ensuing Discourse is that wherein thou hast a considerable Concernment. If thou art a *Christian*, the ensuing Discourse is design'd to justify thy Refusal of that *Religion* which has now got a great Vogue amongst those *Gentlemen*, who set up for the only *Wits*, and aim at monopolizing *Reason*, as if they alone were the *People*, and *Wisdom* was to die with them. They cry up their *Religion* as the only reasonable *Religion*, and traduce all, who will not join with them, as *credulous* and *unreasonable Men*. Whereas, on the contrary, no Man that uses his *Reason* can close with that, which they would obtrude on us as *rational Religion*: Nor can any Man, without being guilty of the fondest *Credulity*, venture his Salvation upon this *modern Paganism* that struts abroad under the modish Name of *Deism*, which, I hope, the ensuing Discourse will evince, wherein it is made appear, That the *Light of Nature* is utterly insufficient to answer the great Ends of *Religion*, and that consequently we had the justest Reason in the World, if there were none, to wish for a *Revelation*

T T T T

from

from GOD, as what is of absolute Necessity to our Happiness; and since there is one, with the greatest Thankfulness to embrace it, cleave to it, and comply with it.

If, Reader, thou hast thy *Religion* yet to choose, which I am afraid is too common a Case, in this unstable Age; then it's high Time thou wert bethinking thy self of *Religion* in earnest.

*To Morrow thou wilt live, thou still dost say,
To Day's too late, the Wise liv'd Yesterday.*

And if after too long a Delay thou mean to avoid an unhappy Choice, Reason advises thee to consider well, That when the Choice is made, Care be taken to make it so, as to prevent the Necessity either of a second Choice, or a too late Repentance for choosing amiss. There is a Set of Men, who cry up at this Day *Natural Religion*, and especially commend it to such as have *no Religion*. 'Tis such as thou art they desire to deal with, and among such it is they are most successful. But if thou hast a Mind not to be deceiv'd in a Matter of such Moment, it imports thee not a little to consider what may be said against that, which it's like may be offer'd thee, as a *Fine, Modish, Reasonable Religion*, meet for a *Gentleman*, a Man of *Wit* and *Reason*. I have here offer'd me to prove this all to be said without, yea against *Reason* and *Experience*. Well, first hear, and then judge, and after choose or refuse as thou seest Cause.

As for the Management of this useful Enquiry, it is wholly suited to that which at first was only design'd, the Satisfaction of the Writer's own Mind about the Question that's here proposed. I entred not upon this Enquiry with an Eye to oppose any Man, or triumph over Adversaries, and so did industriously wave those Catches, Subtilties, and other Niceties us'd frequently by Writers of Controversy. My only Design was to find the *Truth*, and therefore I chose clearly to state the Question, which I found the *Deists* always avoided, and plainly propose my Reasons for that Side of it I took, after Trial, to be the Truth. As to the opposite Opinion, I made it my Business to make a diligent Enquiry into the strongest Arguments advanc'd for it, candidly to propose them in their utmost Force, and closely to answer them; avoiding, as much as might be, such Reproaches as are unworthy of a *Christian*, or an Enquirer after Truth, tho' I met with frequent Provocation, and found some Time
how

how true that is, *Difficile est non scribere Satyram contra Satyram.*

It was not Amusement I aim'd at, or to please my own Fancy, or tickle the Reader's Ears with the Gingle of Words, or divert and byas the Judgment by a Flood of Rhetorick. I never design'd to set up for an Orator. My Business lies quite another Way, it's what I lay no Claim to, and what I think is to be avoided in Discourses of this Kind. All I aim'd at as to Language, was to clothe my Thoughts in plain and intelligible Expressions. The Reader is to expect no more, and if he miss this, I hope it will be but rarely.

It is not to be expected, That a Discourse which was begun in an inverted Order, the middle Part being first writ, and that was compos'd in the Intervals of Business of a very different Nature, at spare Hours, by one of no great Experience, and an utter Stranger to Writings of this Sort, shall be free of Blemishes that may offend nicer Palats. Some few Repetitions could not, at least without more Pains in transcribing than I had either Leisure or Inclination for, well be avoided. Nor could a Discourse so often interrupted by other Business, and upon so very different Subjects, be carry'd on with that Equality of Stile that were to be wish'd, especially by one who was never over much an Affecter of Elegancy of Language. In a Word, the Work is long, much longer than I design'd, and yet without wronging the Subject, at least as I am otherwise stated and engaged, I could not easily shorten it. If he pleases to inspect the Book, he may possibly find, That I had Reason for insisting at that Length I have done. However every one has not his Art who could enclose *Homer's Iliads* in a Nut's Shell.

I am sensible, That what I have discours'd in the first Chapter of the ensuing Treatise concerning the *Occasions of Deism*, will grate hard upon a Set of Men, who have for many Years bygone carry'd all before them, and so took it ill to have any Censures bestow'd on them, tho' they did severely animadvert upon the real or supposed Faults of others. As to this I have not much to say by Way of Apology. That *Deism* has sprung up and grows apace amongst us, is on all Hands confess'd. Others have offer'd their *Conjectures* concerning the Occasions of its Increase. Why I might not offer my *Opinion* also, I know no Reason. The principal Subject of the ensuing Treatise suffers not, tho' I should herein be mistaken. In proposing my Conjecture I did not pursue the Interest of any Party; but have

freely blam'd all Parties. If the Sticklers for the *Arminian* or *Socinian* Divinity are touch'd, it was because I thought they were to be blam'd, and therefore I have withstood them to their Face. As to the Tendency of their Principles I have been sparing, because that

Debate has been sufficiently agitate in the *Low Countries* betwixt the contending Parties. The Reader who would be satisfy'd as to this, may peruse those who have directly managed this Charge, and the Answers that have been made, and judge upon the whole Matter as he finds Cause. But whatever may be as to this,

the Manner of their Management may perhaps be found less capable of a colourable Defence. And it is upon this that I have principally insisted. To oppose, especially from the

See *Bishop of Sarum* on the *Articles*, Preface, P. 7, 8.

Pulpit, with Contempt, Buffoonry, Banter and Satyr Principles, that sober Persons of no contrary Perswasion do own to have at least a very plausible-like Foundation in the *Word of GOD*, and which have been, for well near Sixty or

Seventy Years after the Reformation, the constant Doctrine of the Fathers, and Sons of the *Church of England*, and have by them been insert into her *Articles*, and so become a Part of her *Doctrine*, is a Practice that I do not well understand how to excuse or free from the Imputation of *Profanity*, and which hath too manifest a Tendency to *Atheism*, to admit of any tolerable Defence. The *Scriptures*, and *Truths*, that have any Countenance in them, or Opinions which they seem really to Persons otherwise sober, pious and judicious, not only to teach, but to inculcate as of the highest Importance, are not a meet Subject for Raillery; nor is the Pulpit a meet Place for it. This is that for which principally I have blam'd them, and this I cannot retract. If they take this ill, I ask them, Have not others as much Reason to take it ill that the *Doctrines* of the *Church of England* taught in her *Articles* and *Homilies*, and profess'd by her *learned Bishops*, who compos'd them, and by her *Sons* for so long a Tract of Time, as consonant to, found in, and grounded on the *Word of GOD*, should be so petulantly traduc'd by Wit, Raillery, and declamatory Invectives from Press and Pulpit; and that too by those who have subscrib'd to these *Articles* and *Homilies*? This Management has been complain'd of by sober Persons of all Parties, *Churchmen* and *Dissenters*,

Dissenters, Contra-Remonstrants and *Remonstrants* too, as I could make appear, if there were Occasion for it: And why I might not also complain, I want yet to be inform'd. None is charg'd save the guilty. Others who are free have no Reason to be angry. And, perhaps, they who will be offended at this, would scarce have been pleas'd if I had let it alone.

In the Tenth Chapter of this Treatise, I have oppos'd the Opinion that asserts the *Heathen World* to be under a *Government of Grace*. I know it is maintain'd by many learn'd Men both at home and abroad, from whose Memory, if dead, or just Respect, if alive, I design'd not to detract. Nor did I design to list them with the *Deists*, whom I know to have been solidly oppos'd by severals that were of this Opinion. But yet I do think the Opinion it self destitute of any solid Foundation, with all Deference to them, who think otherwise, either in *Scripture, Reason* or *Experience*. And I am further of the Mind, That the learned Abettors of it, had never embrac'd an Assertion, that exposes them to so many perplexing Difficulties, and puts them upon a Necessity of using so many, I had almost said, *unintelligible* Distinctions for its Support, if they had not been driven to it by some peculiar *Hypothesis* in Divinity which they have seen meet to embrace. If any intend to prove what I have deny'd, I wish it may be done by proper Arguments, directly proving it, and not by advancing an *Hypothesis* that remotely infers it, and which, in it self, or, at least as propos'd by those whom I have met with, is so dark'ned by a huge Multitude of subtile, mysterious and uncouth Distinctions, that I can scarce ever project so much Time as to understand them. However this much I must say, That so cross does this Opinion seem to *Scripture, Reason* and *Experience*, That it will go a very great Way to weaken the Credit of any *Hypothesis* on which it inevitably follows. However, I hope this may be said, and different Opinions about this Point, without any Breach of Charity, may be retain'd. *Diversum sentire duos de Rebus iisdem incolumi licuit semper Amicitia*. I know the Abettors of this Opinion are hearty Friends in the Main to the Cause I here maintain.

The Scheme, I have in the Close of that Chapter offer'd by Way of *Digression*, of GOD's Government of the *Heathen World*, is not design'd as a full Account of that Matter, which as to many of its Concernments is of those Things that are not reveal'd, and so belong not to us; much less is it design'd to be the Ground of a *peremptory Judgment*

as to the *eternal State* of them, who are without the *Church*: But only to let see, That *any Thing* we certainly know as to GOD's Dealings with them, in the common Course of his *Providence*, may, upon other *Suppositions* and *Principles*, beside that rejected, be accounted for. The judicious and sober Reader may judge of it as he sees Cause. I hope I have in a Matter of such Difficulty avoided any unbecoming Curiosity, or affecting to be *wise above what is written*.

If any blame me for the Multitude of Quotations, I answer, The Subject I undertook rendred this unavoidable. I have us'd the utmost Candor in them. Sometimes out of a Regard to Brevity I have avoided the Translation of Testimonies quoted from Authors who writ in a different Language. The learn'd will not complain of this: And if any Person of tolerable Judgment, who is not learn'd, will be at Pains to peruse the ensuing Discourse, he will find as much said, without regarding those Quotations, as may satisfy his Mind upon this Subject.

As to what I have, in the ensuing Papers ascrib'd to Mr. Gildon Publisher of the *Oracles of Reason*, I had writ it before I understood his Recovery from *Deism*. But yet I thought it not meet to alter it, because there are, no Doubt, many others who entertain the same Notions he then did maintain, and my Opposition is to the *Principles* and not the *Persons*. As for his Recovery I congratulate it, and wish it may be such as may secure him from an after Reck'ning for the Hurt he has done.

If any *Deist* shall see meet to undertake this Debate, I decline it not. If they treat my Book as they have done those of others, every Way my Superiors, and as Rats are wont to do, gnaw only the Outside, divert to incident Things that are not to the Purpose, and single out rather what seems exceptionable than what is of Moment, following him who did so,

Et quæ
Desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquit.

I have somewhat else to do, than to take any Notice of such Impertinency. If any shall offer a *solid* and *rational* Confutation, which yet I am not much afraid of, and convince me not by Jest, Buffoonry and Raillery, but by solid Arguments of my being in a Mistake,

*Cuncta recantabo Maledicta, priora rependam
Ludibus, & vestrum Nomen in Astra feram.*

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INTRODUCTION.

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A Modest

ENQUIRY

WHETHER

*Regeneration or Justification has
the Precedency in Order of
Nature.*

I.

The Question stated.

THE Question is, Whether *Justification*, which comprizeth *Absolution from Guilt, Forgiveness of Sin, and gracious Acceptation of our Persons*, doth, in *Order of Nature*, preceed the *Renovation of our Natures* by the Spirit of Christ, the *Implantation of Supernatural Habits of Grace, a Principle of Life*, or the *new Creature*? Or, on the other Hand, Are elect Sinners first renew'd, regenerated and furnished with a *Principle of Life*, which being excited through the *Influence of the Spirit of Life*, accepts of Christ in the Offer of the Gospel, whereon *Justification* follows in the same Instant of Time, yet as consequent in Order of Nature?



II.

I I.

Difficulties stated on either Hand.

IF *Regeneration* is said to preceed *Justification*, then the ensuing Difficulties offer.

1. How is it consistent with the *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* of **GOD**, to impart his *Image* to a *Sinner*, yet under the *Curse*? This respects **GOD's Act**, and seems to fix an *Incongruity* on him.

2. How can it be conceiv'd that a *Soul* yet under *Wrath* and the *Curse*, is dignify'd with the *Image* of **GOD**? This seems to be inconsistent, if we look at the *Things* themselves, and that *Order*, which their *Nature* leads to.

3. Does not this make the *Object* of *Justification* to be a *holy renew'd Saint*, and not an *ungodly Sinner*, according to *Rom. 4. 5.*

4. How can the *Soul* be Partaker of *spiritual Life*, before its *Union* with *Christ*, the *Fountain of Life*? *Union* is by *Faith*, by which we come to *Christ* for *Life*: But this renders it needless, because we have *Life* before *Union*.

5. Does not this make the *Collation* of the *Spirit* antecedent to *Union* and *Faith*? And yet by *Faith* we receive the *Spirit*, *Gal. 3. 14.*

6. Does not this suppose the *Heart* to be purify'd before *Faith*, while yet it is purify'd by *Faith*? *Acts 15. 9.*

7. Is not the *new Creature* begot by the *immortal Seed* of the *Word*? Now, can the *Word* operate any other Way than by the *Interveniency* of *Faith* receiving it?

If, on the other Hand, *Justification* is said to preceed, the Difficulties are many, which I need not stand to repeat at Length; only,

1. How will this accord with the *Doctrine* of the *Reform'd Churches* and *Divines*, that harmoniously teach the contrary? And how does it agree with our *Confession* and *Catechisms*, which we sign an Assent to? particularly, where they treat of *Effectual Calling*.

2. How can we conceive the *Acts* of *Life*, while there is no *abiding Principle* whence they should proceed? The *Acts* of *Faith* without the *Spirit* of *Faith*?

3. How

3. How can we understand an *unrenewed Soul* to be the *Subject* of this noblest *Act* of *Faith* that unites to Christ, and by which we are justify'd? I speak of it *objectively*, and interested in him and his Benefits?

4. Whereas there are many *Things* in all the *Faculties* imply'd in justifying *Faith*, it may be enquir'd, How can it be understood that the whole *Soul* in all its *Powers*, should thus, before it is renewed, harmoniously and uniformly go out toward the *LORD*, assenting to the *Record* concerning him, choosing, approving and resting in him?

5. Can the best of *Fruit* be produc'd without a *Root*? These and many such *Difficulties*, commonly enough known and alledg'd, might be insisted on: But I think it needless. These may serve for a *Taste*.

I I I.

A Scheme of Principles exhibited for the Vindication of the commonly receiv'd Opinion, viz. That tho' they are agreed on all Hands, to be at one and the same Time; yet Regeneration in Order of Nature preceeds Justification.

Prop. 1. I. **A** Design being laid in the Decree of GOD to save elect Sinners, to the Praise of Grace, by Jesus Christ; they were in the Covenant of Redemption, giv'n to the Son. The Law of Works, by an *Act* of Sovereignty was relax'd, not as to its Obligation simply, but in so far as it respected Man himself, as the Subject of the Obligation to doing or suffering; nor was the Law simply relax'd as it oblig'd Man, even elect Sinners to do or obey; but in so far as it oblig'd them to obey, in Order to Exemption from the Curse, and a Title to Life. And he, to whom elect Sinners were thus giv'n, by the Designation of the Father and his own Consent, was substitute in the Room of elect Sinners, and thereby came under an Obligation in their Stead, to answer the Demands of the Law as to what it requir'd of them, in Order to avoid its Curse, and entitle to the promis'd Blessings; or shortly, he became oblig'd to fulfil its Demands, as it was a Covenant in their Stead. Moreover he undertook as Mediator, by the Price of his Blood to purchase

chase compleat Redemption for them, and all Things belonging necessarily to it.

Corol. My Design requires not a nice stating of the foregoing Truths, generally own'd amongst the Orthodox; only I observe that from all this, the Purpose of the Father, his giving elect Sinners to Christ, his Substitution of him in their Room, and the Son's Acceptation; some Relation betwixt him and them doth result, which may as fitly be design'd

by the Name of an Union, as any Word or Name I know to assign. It is granted that this is not that compleat mystical Union, whereby we are actually grafted into him as Branches into the Tree, whether it shall be call'd a legal or federal, fundamental or fountain Union, as our Divines differently term it, I am not concern'd. Yet cer-

tain it is, that such a Relation there is, and that it is the Fountain of all subsequent Advantages to the Elect.

II. This Relaxation of the Law as to the original Subject of its Obligation; in so far as it was the Condition of the Covenant of Works, Substitution of Christ and his voluntary Subjection to that Obligation, &c. being all, in the Purpose of GOD, and Transactions of the Father and Son, in the Covenant of Redemption, expressly and directly design'd for them who were giv'n of the Father, it follows plainly, That immediately upon Christ's yielding of Satisfaction demanded, paying the Price, or his Engagement (for that is equivalent where the Undertaker could not, nor would fail) there did result a Right for them to Freedom from the Curse, and to all the Benefits of his Purchase. This Right is not what the Lawyers call *Jus in Re*, but *Jus ad Rem*. 'Tis more properly said,

There's a Right for them, than that they have a Right; since they know not of it, it is not actionable by them, nor is it actually vested in their Person. Yet with GOD it is righteous, that they for whom Justice is satisfy'd, a Price paid, Redemption is purchased, &c. should at the Time and in the Order agreed on, be put in actual Possession of those Privileges. The Use of this will appear in due Time.

The Foundation of this Assertion lies in this plain Scripture Truth, viz. That tho' the ultimate Design of all is the Glory of the adorable Trinity; yet the principal subordinate End, proper and immediate Design of Father and Son in the Undertaking, Exhibition of Christ in the

the Flesh, his Obedience and Death, under all Considerations of it, as a *Satisfaction, Attonement, Price and Ransom*, was not to obtain *Liberty for the Father*, without Injury to his *Justice*, to bestow; or a *Right to the Son* to Redemption and the Benefits of it, that he might bestow them on whom, and on what Terms he saw meet: But the *Salvation of Sinners*, and the *Redemption of Persons*. The whole not only includes a remote Respect to Sinners: But the *Salvation of Persons* being design'd, the Designation of Christ to the Work of Redemption, &c. his whole mediatory Office and his Undertaking and Execution of it primarily aim'd at the *Salvation of Sinners*. It was not the *Impetration* of the Effects absolutely, but the *Salvation of lost Sinners by them* that was primarily in view. This is plain from this, That the Whole of the Mediation of Christ was pursuant to the Purpose of GOD, with Respect to the Salvation of Sinners. The Scripture speaks not of the absolute Procurement of these Things; but it constantly includes a direct Respect to Sinners, to their personal Advantage. The Father sent; the Son came to *save them that were lost*, our Sins were laid on him. He was made a Curse for us, that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in him. He was made LORD of the Dead and the Living; or, which is the same, had Power given him over all Flesh, that he might give eternal Life to as many as were given him of the Father. In a Word, they, who ever they were, for whom Christ died, of which we dispute not now, being in the Design, and all being for them, with a direct and immediate Respect to their Advantage, a Right there must result for them. This is oppos'd by *Universalists*, because it undermines the Foundation of their whole Fabrick, viz. That the Effect wherein the Death of Christ, as a *Satisfaction, Ransom or Price*, did terminate, was the Procurement of the Things, or Impetration of them, and not the Advantage of Persons by the Application of them. But this must not make us forgo what the whole Tenor of the Scripture uniformly bears Witness to. The Charge of *Antinomianism* will be answer'd by the next Proposition.

III. *Pardon, Absolution* from Guilt and all those saving Blessings Christ purchas'd *sub Termino*, that is, It was agreed in the Contract, whereby Christ was constitute Surety and Mediator, that those Blessings should be actually giv'n out to each of them, for whom they were design'd *respōtine*, in their several Generations, in the Season and Order prefix by GOD, to the Praise of glorious Grace.

Cor. Hence we see that the *Elect* can lay no Claim to any Thing, on Account of Christ's Satisfaction or Purchase, but at the Time, and in
the

the Order agreed on, and therefore, till then, in themselves, they are in no better Case than others.

Cor. Hence also we learn the true Reason of this, That they, for whom *Satisfaction* is made, a *Ransom* paid, &c. do yet continue under the *Curse* or *Wrath* of GOD, as well as others. It is not because Christ paid not the *Idem*, the same in *Specie* or *Kind*, that was due from Sinners, as *Baxter* fondly supposes; but the true Reason is, That all these Privileges, being contriv'd and provided by a Concert betwixt the Father and Son, without the Sinner's Knowledge, or any Contribution of Counsel, Performance, or Consent, it did belong to them who had brought about all this, by the best of *Rights*, to give out, at *what Time* or in *what Order* they pleas'd, the good Things design'd, which was accordingly fixt in the *Covenant of Redemption*, all being adjusted as to *Order* and *Time*.

IV. Christ Jesus the *Mediator*, immediately upon the Performance of what was demanded of him, was fully discharg'd, in so far as he stood himself oblig'd, and to him, as *Trustee appointed by the Father*, and *Head* of those given to him, for whom he gave his *Life a Ransom*; The Management of that *Right purchas'd for them* by his Blood, and confirm'd also thereby to them, and which, till the Time of their actual Investiture, is lodg'd in the Hand of the *Righteousness* and *Faithfulness* of GOD; The Management of this *Right*, I say, for their Behoof, was wholly committed to him, and Access allow'd him at the respective *Terms* agreed on, to sue it out, claim and demand the outgiving of the Privileges, and the investing of the Persons with the *actual Right* to them, in the Order agreed on, and in due Season, to make the *Claim*, crave this at the Hand of the *Righteousness* and *Faithfulness* of GOD, is the Design of his *Intercession* or appearing in the *Highest* with his own Blood, which is the *Ground* of his *Claim*. This *Trust* and *Province* he faithfully manages. The faithful Advocate never fails, in due Season, to put in his *Claim*.

Cor. This Discharge of our Debt to our Surety, tho' 'tis not our *Justification* properly and strictly so call'd; yet our Divines, *Charnock*, *Witsius*, &c. do not unfitly term it our *Fundamental* or *General Justification*: Because it was for us he suffer'd and paid the *Ransom*, and offer'd this *Oblation*. The *Right* and *Privileges* purchas'd and confirm'd by his Death was for us. And the Provision made for the Conveyance of this *Right* and *Privileges* respects us, and the Conveyance of *Right* and *Possession* is hereby absolutely secur'd, tho' mean While, in our selves, we are as before, till the *Term* agreed on come.

V. When

V. When the *Term* prefix'd, for the actual outgiving of *Privileges*, draws on, 'tis so ordered, That the *Elect Soul* is summon'd, at the Instance of the *Justice* and *Law* of GOD, for his *Violation of the Law*. The Charge is inforc'd on his Conscience; GOD, in the *Word's Discoveries* of him, thro' the Spirit's Influence, joining with the *Word*, is sited as *Judge*. His *Presence*, *Majesty*, *Justice* and *Holiness* are realiz'd to the Sinner, and he stands now in this *lower Court*, at GOD's *Tribunal* erected there. He is beat from Denials, Pleas, Extenuations, Shifts or Evasions, that he can devise: Whereon he stands at this *lower Tribunal* before GOD, *Self-convicted*, and with his *Mouth stopp'd*.

VI. If any *Sentence* should pass, while Matters stand thus, it must unavoidably be a *Sentence of Condemnation*. The Charge is prov'd, the Libel is relevant, all Pleas made are repell'd justly nay, past from by the Pannel. But the *Term* being *now come*, the faithful Advocate, that will lose none of his, steps in, appears in the *Higher House*, where he is entred with his *own Blood*, and puts in his *Claim*, on Behalf of the Criminal arraign'd before GOD's *Tribunal below*, to this Purpose, tho' not in such Words, if in Words at all I enquire not, "This poor Criminal *was thine* by Creation, thy Prisoner by his *Rebellion*: But *thou gavest him to me*. I bore the *Curse of the Law*, due to his Sins, for him, behold my *Wounds*! I purchas'd all saving Blessings, lo there is my *Blood*! the Price of Redemption. The *Term is come*. I crave therefore that in Consideration of what I have done and suffer'd, he be *acquitted*, purchas'd Grace given out to enable him to put in his *Claim* at the Bar, where he now stands personally convict: And finally, that thereon he be absolv'd, accepted and entred to orderly Possession of all purchas'd Privileges. Christ's Appearance in the Holiest for us must be allow'd to import no less by any, who own the Orthodox Doctrine, as to Christ's *Oblation* and *Intercession* and their mutual Relation.

Cor. Christ's *Intercession*, tho' 'tis represented as a *Prayer*; yet is not strictly so; But in as far as concerns himself, 'tis a *Claim of Right*, tho' as other *legal Claims*, out of a Regard to the Majesty of the Judge, it's manag'd in Form of a Prayer, or what is equivalent thereto; or rather it is represented in *Condescension to our Capacity*, after this Manner: The Way of transacting Things in Heaven, betwixt the glorious *Judge* and *Advocate* being above our Reach.

VII. This Plea being made *above*, on Behalf of the Sinner convict at GOD's *Tribunal below* is admitted, and the Admission of it, in what Manner

Manner soever it is done, imports, 1. *A reckoning of Christ to the Criminal*, or an Acknowledgement that his *Undertaking* respected *this Sinner*, now pursued by the *Law* of GOD, before GOD's *Tribunal* on *Earth*. 2. An Acknowledgement of the *Dueness*, or to speak more properly, an Acknowledgement that *Absolution* is of *Right due* on Account of *Satisfaction* made, and all other *Privileges* on Account of the *Price* paid. 3. In Consideration of the one and the other, Order is, as it were, given out (I speak after our Manner of conceiving and expressing what is above our Reach) for the actual putting the Sinner in *Possession* of these Advantages respectively.

This is what Dr. Owen calls *Absolution in Heaven*, before believing. And it is, as it were, a second Step, Moment, Instant, or as *Witfius* speaks, *Articulus* of the Sinner's *Justification*. But this being of great Moment, for clearing the Difficulties above-mention'd, we must illustrate and confirm it. Observe

1. Tho' this, in Order of Nature, preceeds any Grace in the Sinner; yet this *Regeneration*, *Believing* and *Justification* are all at one and the same Instant of Time.

2. However in our Way of expressing the deep Things of GOD, and for our more easy Conception, we are oblig'd to think and speak of each of these as *distinct Acts*; yet we pretend not to determine the Manner how these Things are done, and such a Plea is made, its admitted, and its Admission imports what we have mention'd.

3. This is no new nor singular Opinion. Many of our old Divines have gone further in their Expressions: But what we have pleaded for, is no more than the native Consequence of agreed

Dr. Owen on the
Death of Christ, P. 68.
&c.

Truths before laid down. Dr. Owen, who was remote enough from Novelties, asserts this at Length, and defends it against *Baxter*, in his Discourse of the *Death of Christ*, and Appendix to *Vindicia Evangelica*. And *Witfius* in his *Dissertationes Irenicae* pleads for it.

Vind. Evan. App.
Witf. Cap. 110. P. 130.

4. Besides the Confirmation given to it, by the foregoing Propositions, unavoidably leading to this, we may add, That 1. This is the Order the Scripture directs us to, *Rom. 8. 32*. Christ is first *delivered for us*, then given to us, then *with him all other Things*. 2. The giving out of the first Grace, viz. *Faith*, in Scripture is declar'd to be an Act of *Righteousness*, *2 Pet. 3. 3*. The Saints are said to obtain *Faith* through the *Righteousness* of GOD. But this it can no otherwise be,

of Regeneration and Justification.

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be, but in Consideration of the *Right* obtain'd by Christ, and as it proceeds upon an antecedent Admission of that on their Behalf, which is all that is intended. Again 3. 'Tis expressly asserted, That *it's given us on the Behalf of Christ to believe*, Phil. 1. 29. or for his Sake. Now this imports, That GOD in giving it, has a Regard to what Christ has done for them, and that he thereon gives it out, as what is of *Right due*, on Consideration of that. And this is all that's intended.

4. How comes the Grace of *Faith*, for Example, to be given to *Peter*, and not to *Judas*, for Christ's Sake? Is it not that GOD looks upon Christ, as standing under *another Relation* to *Peter* than to *Judas*? And what is this, but to reckon him to the one and not to the other? Dr. Owen adds, That perhaps this may be what is intended by the *Justification of the Ungodly*, Rom. 4. 5. But as he is not peremptory, so neither shall I be.

5. Yet I say, this is not *Justification* of the Sinner, tho' 'tis a Step to it and issues in it. And that 1. Because it is not, at least, ordinarily, so call'd in Scripture. 2. This is a Sentence past, it's true, by GOD, but not in that Court where the Sinner stands personally arraign'd. 3. This Act terminates not on the Sinner. In it self it goes no further than, as it were, to speak after our Manner, a *Warrant* for the *Out-giving of Grace*, to put the Sinner in Case to make his Plea, where he now stands convicted. The Sinner is as before, till this is executed, which is at the very same Instant. I confess,

Cor. This *Reck'ning* of Christ to us, makes, as it were, a *second Step* or *Advance* toward that compleat Union design'd.

VIII. This Act being past in his Favours, who now trembles at the Bar knowing nothing of it, is instantly executed. The Spirit of Christ takes Possession, creates a *Principle of Grace* in the Soul; and in the wise and exact *Providence* of GOD, Christ in the *Promise* is held forth as the *Ordinance* of GOD for the Salvation of Sinners, and particularly as the *Propitiation*: The poor Sinner himself, through the enlightning, enlivening and quick'ning Influence of the same Spirit, in that very Instant, closes with, and accepts of Christ as his *Righteousness*.

IX. Hereon immediately GOD the Judge acquits the *impannel'd Sinner*, sifted before him personally, and receives him into Favour, only on Account of Christ and his *Righteousness* imputed to him. The Nature of which is properly call'd *Justification*. We need not enquire into it, being commonly discours'd of.

B

X. This

X. This *Justification*, properly so call'd, differs vastly from that *Ab-solution in Heaven* formerly mention'd. For,

1. The former *Act* did not reach the *Sinner himself*: But now the *Sinner* is personally acquit by an *Act* of *GOD*, terminated in the *Sinner's Conscience*. For,

2. In this *Sentence*, the *Plea* of *Justice* and *Law* against the *Sinner* manag'd in his *Conscience*, is declar'd void, and let fall for ever; so that none ever can again, by *Warrant* from *GOD*, insist against the *justify'd Sinner*, upon that *Charge*, to the *Disturbance* of his *Peace*, or his *Condemnation*. I deny not that a litigious *Accuser of the Brethren*, and with him his *inform'd Conscience*, may abuse this, to give the poor *Creature Trouble*. But,

3. In this *Sentence*, and by it, there is a *claimable Defence*, that justly may, and instantly should be taken hold of, and pleaded for the *Relief* of the *Conscience*, against all *Disturbances* of this *Nature*. And this with the former clears what is mean'd by *terminated in Conscience*.

4. The *Sinner* by this has immediate *Access* to *Peace* with *GOD* and his *Favour*; tho' sometimes he cannot at first recover so soon out of the *Fright* his former *Condition* casts him in, as immediately to use it.

5. This *Act*, as any one may see, is an *Act past here on Earth*, tho' by *GOD*, immediately and directly respecting the *Sinner himself* sifted before *GOD*, as above; whereas all former *Acts* reached not *himself* personally, but did terminate on *Christ our Head and Advocate*, for the *Behoof* of *Sinners*.

XI. By the foregoing *Propositions* it appears, That tho' the compleat *mystical Union*, betwixt *Christ* and *elect Sinners*, is not before *Faith*; yet there are several *Sorts of Unions* before it, and each of them attended with its own *special Use* and *Influence*. Nor is there any *Danger of Anti-*

nomianism here. The most zealous Opposers of *Gospel Truth* stated *Antinomians* grant all that I advance. Dr. *Wil-*
Cap. 11. Pag. 92. *liams* in particular, asserts all that I design most expressly; and our *Divines* say the same.

Witf. Dissert. Iren. 1. *Christ* and they are *one in the Decree*: Which
Cap. 6. Par. 1, 2, 3. yet infers Nothing, says *Witsius*, but that in *Time* they shall be actually united.

2. They are *one Federally*, or as others express it, *Legally*, by *Virtue* of the *Covenant of Redemption*, wherein *Christ* is constitute *Head* of the *Elect*, and *Surety* substitute in their *Stead*; which yet infers no present *Alteration*

of Regeneration and Justification.

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Alteration in their State, but leaves them as *before*, until, in the Order agreed on in that Transaction, they are brought out of it.

3. They are *one in Nature*. Christ taking Part with the Children herein, that *he might redeem them*, being our *near Kinsman*.

4. They are *one really*, tho' upon their Part only *passively*, when the Spirit of Christ in his Name, takes Possession of, and unites them to Christ. There are *two Bonds of Union*; the Spirit on the Part of Christ, and Faith on ours. Union must begin on his Part; and his taking hold on us is the Cause of our taking hold of him, and so must be, in Order of Nature, before. These Things are not contested; and yet are of chief Use in the Business in Hand.

XII. 'Tis likewise apparent from what has been discoursed, That the Sinner's Discharge advances by Steps; some of which do preceed Faith.

1. There is that *fundamental or general Justification*, as Charnock and Witsius call it, when Christ was discharg'd. This is in Time antecedent to Justification. Wits. ubi sup. Cap. 10. §. 2, 3, 4.

2: There is that *Absolution in Heaven*, which we have clear'd and confirm'd above. This is not in Time, but in Order of Nature only, antecedent to Faith.

3. There is *Justification strictly and properly so call'd*, which immediately follows Faith.

I V.

The Principles more largely laid down, explain'd and confirm'd above, more briefly summ'd up, and offer'd in a joint View, that their Influence into the Resolution of the above-mention'd Difficulties may more clearly appear.

Prop. 1. CHRIST JESUS, in the Covenant of Redemption, was substitute, and did substitute himself Head, Surety, and Mediator, for those giv'n to him of the Father, obliging thereby himself to make Satisfaction to Justice in their Stead, and purchase compleat Redemption

Redemption for them, by his bearing the *Curse* for them, to purchase to them all saving Blessings.

II. Immediately upon his Performance or Engagement equivalent to Performance, a *Right* for those, giv'n to him, to all these Blessings, did result, that is, it became *Righteous* with GOD to give, under the Restriction just now to be mention'd, a *Right* to and *Possession* of all those Things procur'd for them, by the *Satisfaction*, *Oblation* and *Price* of *Redemption* above-mention'd.

III. All these Things were purchast *sub Termino*, that is, to be actually given out to the Persons concern'd, at a *Time*, and in an *Order* agreed on, betwixt *Father* and *Son*, who were the *Contrivers* and *Managers* of this whole Matter.

IV. Immediately upon Performance of what he oblig'd himself to, Christ was *discharg'd* as to his own *Obligation*, and actually *instated* in the *Possession* of what was promis'd himself. The *Right* purchased for *Sinners*, being lodg'd safely in the Hand of the *Righteousness* and *Faithfulness* of GOD, *Action* was allow'd him, as their *Head* and *Trustee*, for their *actual Investiture* with *Right* to the *Possession* of all in the *Time* and *Order* agreed on.

V. When this *Term* approaches, the *Sinner* on Earth, by a *Summons*, at the Instance of injur'd *Justice*, is sifted before the *Tribunal* of GOD *here below*, where GOD is presented to him, in his *Majesty* and *Holiness*, as *Judge*, by the *Word* and *Spirit*; and *here, before* GOD, he is *chang'd*, *convicted*, and his *Mouth stopp'd*.

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ, the vigilant and faithful *Advocate*, knowing fully the poor *Sinner's* Case, viz. That "he is now on *Earth* arraign'd before GOD's *Tribunal*, and duly convicted there, "and that he cannot orderly be *discharg'd*, but upon a *Plea*, where- "in he is really and actually interest'd, and his Interest evicted be- "fore the *Judge* in that Court, where now he stands personally sifted. The blessed *Advocate* knowing, I say, this to be the Case, and that *Term* being now come, he moves his *Action* in the *holiest*, in the *higher* Court, before the same *Judge*, on Behalf of the *Sinner*, where he is enter'd with his own Blood.

VII. This *Action* is admitted, his *Plea* *sustain'd*, and *Sentence* pass'd thereon, which issues not *first* or *immediately* in the *Sinner's* *Discharge*, but only in what is preparatory thereto, viz. The present *Out-giving* of what is necessary to *instatate* the *Sinner*, in an *actual* and *actionable* *Plea*, and enable him to put in an *orderly Claim* for a *Discharge*, where he is

now

now arraign'd, that is, the *sending of the Spirit* to work *Regeneration*, and thereby enable him to accept Christ freely offer'd in the Gospel, by *Faith*: By which being united to Christ, his *Righteousness* becomes *pleadable* and is *presented*. The sustaining of Christ's Action in the *higher Court*, is that which we call *Absolution in Heaven*, which has been explain'd and confirm'd above.

VIII. Christ's Action being sustain'd in the *higher Court*, tho' it does not of it self liberate the Sinner *immediately*; yet the Advantage of this Sentence in Christ's Favours, for the Sinner's Behoof is that, 1. The *Curse of the Law* cannot be alledg'd against the Out-giving and actual Collation of the *Spirit of Grace*, or *Faith* in particular; this being instructed, That Christ has born it for the Pannel. 2. These Things being demanded, and a Price pay'd for them, they instantly are order'd for the Sinner, as what cannot of Right be deny'd, in Consideration of the Plea now made in due Time. 3. Immediately hereon, the *holy Spirit* in Christ's Name executes this, takes Possession, enables to believe, and makes the poor Sinner believe, working Faith in Principle and Act, and by this *mystical Union* begun by the Spirit's Entrance, is now compleated by Faith's closing with Christ, and making him its Plea.

IX. Immediately hereon, GOD justifies the Sinner, by an Act terminating on his Conscience, or on him personally considered, freeing him from all righteous Pursuit, upon the Charge now alledg'd, constituting him free, and accepting him into Favour, allowing him to plead this Acquittance against all Acculations, Rom. 8. 33, 34.

V.

Application of the foregoing Principles, for removing of the above-mention'd Objections, and other Things suggested to the same Purpose.

IF the Satisfaction of the Mind in a full clearing of the Difficulties had not been aim'd at, short Answers without such a Process, might have serv'd most of them: But the Way being now prepar'd, we shall directly answer them.

Obj. I. How

Obj. I. How is it consistent with the *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* of GOD to give out his *Spirit*, stamp his *Image* on a *Sinner* yet under the *Curse*? For 'tis manifest, That in the Sight of GOD, the *Sinner* is still to be considered as *such*, until he be justify'd.

Answer 1. Those of the opposite Opinion, at least, such of them as we have principally in View, are burden'd with the same Difficulties. The *Act* of justifying *Faith*, being an Effect of *special Grace*, wrought in the Soul of a *Sinner*, antecedently in *Ordine Considerationis* or *Nature* to *Justification*, the same Difficulty may be moved about the one as the other. How comes GOD to send his *Spirit* to work *Faith* in a *Sinner*, yet under the *Curse*?

2. Admitting what has been said above, as to the *Claim* put in by the blessed *Intercessor*, and GOD's *Admittance* of it, there's no Difficulty at all in the Business to conceive, That GOD granting himself satisfy'd, as to the *Criminal's Sins*, admitting a *Price of Redemption* paid for all saving Blessings, in *Consideration* of that *Satisfaction* and that *Price*, made and pay'd, and the *Benefit* of it orderly claim'd, in due Season, gives out what is at present necessary, for instating him in the *actual Right*, to full and personal Absolution. GOD hereon giving out those Privileges, looks on the *Sinner* indeed, as yet under the *Curse*; but withall, as for whom that *Curse* was born, and to whom he is, by Virtue of his Transaction with Christ, who was made a *Curse* for him, oblig'd to collate what was purchas'd, in Order to his personal or plenary Discharge.

Obj. II. 'Tis alledg'd, That this is contrary to that Order, that the very Nature of Things directs to, that a *Sinner* yet under the *Curse*, should be stamp'd with the *Image of GOD*, or that one dignify'd with this *Image* should be under the *Curse*? First, *Wrath* would be remov'd, a *Right* given, and then *Privileges*. This Order the Nature of Things directs to.

Ans. I. There were some Difficulties here, if Matters stood so for some Time: But both being at the same Instant, 'tis scarce worth while to debate it.

2. Allowing it absurd to imagine, That one under the *Curse* simply, should be dignify'd with the *Image of GOD*; yet it is not so, That a *Sinner* for whom *Satisfaction* is made and admitted, as above, and this *Privilege* purchas'd should be thus dignify'd in Order to enable him to put in, at that very Instant, a *Claim* to a personal and plenary Discharge.

3. The *first Result* of Christ's Death being the *Satisfaction of Justice*, for our Offences, according to our Way of conceiving, the Order of Things is sufficiently hereby secur'd, in as much as there is no *Blessing* imparted, but upon *Satisfaction first made*, and a *Price pay'd*. As to the Order of the Investiture of the Persons with *Right*, and possessing the Persons of the *Privileges*, we must allow GOD to be the best Judge.

Obj. III. This makes the Object of GOD's *justifying Act* to be, not an *ungodly Sinner*, but a *renewed Saint*, contrary to Rom. 4. 5. And consequently the *Offer of Remission* is to *Saints* and not *Sinners*. This being much insisted on by some, we shall consider it the more largely.

Ans. 1. 'Tis observable in Scripture, That no Man is term'd *Righteous* or *Unrighteous*, *Godly* or *Ungodly*, meerly on Account of *habitual Righteousness*. These *Denominations* always respect *Acts*. *He that doth Righteousness is righteous*. Now the Person at the *Instant of Justification* is one, all whose former Actings have been *ungodly*, and who antecedently to his *Justification* has not done any *Works of Righteousness*.

2. This Expression being here us'd with Respect to *Justification*, it must be taken in that Sense, that relates to the Business in Hand, and he is to be deem'd *Ungodly*, who has no *Godliness*, that the Judge can admit in Judgment, as a Ground of *Justification*. In the Eye of the *Law* he is *Ungodly*, have what he will, and as to this Business. Here then, and in a *Law Sense* he is *Ungodly*, having no Plea, but standing convict, with his Mouth stopp'd.

3. According to the above-mention'd Scheme, he can have no Eye to any Thing in *himself*, as contributing to his *Justification*, either *habitual* or *actual*. For, 1. *Habitual Grace* is not discernible in *it self*, but only in its *actings*. 2. There is no *Act of Grace*, previous, in any Instant of Time, to *justifying Faith*. And, 3. At that very Instant he is justify'd. Whence 'tis evident, That he can discern no *Grace* in *himself*, till he is *justify'd*, and so can lay no Stress on any.

4. 'Tis hence evident, That *Faith* is the Outgoing of the Soul of a poor Sinner convicted of his own *Ungodliness*; that sees nothing in himself, but *Sin* and *Guilt*, after Christ for *Righteousness*; and who is fully satisfy'd, That if GOD enter into Judgment with him, upon his own *Godliness*, he has none at all, no *Acts of Righteousness*, that can be admitted, much less a *compleat Righteousness*; yea on the contrary, he is all *Guilt*, *Sin*, and *Defilement*.

5. Nor

5. Nor can the Judge, in *Justification*, have Regard to it. Were he to proceed upon *habitual Holiness*, this would not pass according to the *Rule*; the Renovation being but in Part. And for *Acts*, the Sinner has none. So if Sentence should pass upon him, with Respect to this, the Judge could not avoid to condemn him. He must *legally find him Ungodly*, and as such condemn him.

6. I may add, When GOD is said to *justify the Ungodly*, this *Justifying* is not restricted to one precise Action. All agree, it takes in the *Imputation of Christ and his Righteousness*, and not merely the *Act of Acquittance thereon*, which the Sound of the Word seems to import. Take it in this Latitude, as I see no Reason why we may not, and then the first Instance of the *Imputation of Christ*, as we have heard above, is in Order of Nature, before either *Faith* or *Regeneration*, as we have clear'd above: Tho' *formal Imputation and Justification* is consequent hereto.

7. From all this, 'tis evident, That this Account leaves no Room to Ministers to insinuate to their People, That they must not adventure by *Faith* to betake themselves to *Christ's Righteousness*, till they see such and such *Qualifications in themselves*, *Regeneration*, *Repentance* or the like, which is the Danger that the Movers of this Objection seem very apprehensive of; and to avoid which, some of them have us'd Expressions obnoxious enough to Misconstruction. The Minister dealing with the convinc'd Sinner is not to bid him look inward, to see whether he be regenerated, and truly repents; and if he finds not these, not to expect *Justification*, or go to Christ for it. Such an Enquiry, before *Justification*, is vain and preposterous, and 'tis impossible ever to believe on these Terms: But he is with the Apostle, *Acts 16*. directly to press, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. And on the other Hand, the Sinner, like the poor Jailor, without any such previous Enquiry for *Qualifications in himself*, should directly grip to Christ for *Righteousness*, as one altogether lost in himself, and destitute of any *Qualifications* that can avail him. And yet all this is without

Isai. 55. 7. Prejudice to Ministers pressing *Conversion*, *Repentance*

Mark 1. 16. and *Faith*, at the same Time, as Scripture Precepts

Acts 3. 14. and Examples require, and that without troubling

Act. 5. 30, 31. themselves or People, with the Disputes about the

Acts 26. 18. Priority or Posteriority of these, in Order of Nature, while it is agreed they are all at the same Time.

Hundreds have successfully preach'd the Gospel, and many more receiv'd it, without ever concerning themselves in these Questions.

Obj.

Obj. IV. How can the Soul be Partaker of *spiritual Life* before its *Union* with Christ the *Fountain of Life*? *Union* is by *Faith*, by which we come to Christ for *Life*: But the Order asserted renders this Errand needless, because we have *Life* before *Union*.

Ans. 1. We have before clear'd, That there are *several Kinds of Union* before compleat *mystical Union*. And as to this, Orthodox Divines, the most zealous Opposers of *Antinomianism* not excepted, do agree. And each of these *Unions* are attended with special advantageous Influences with Respect to the Elect.

2. To answer more closely, This *passive Union*, as we call'd it above, flowing from the Spirit of Christ, its taking Possession and working a vital Principle, must, in Order of Nature, preceed all Acts of ours. *Union* must begin on his Part. The *first uniting Act* belongs to the *living Principle*. The Spirit enters into the *Body* and actuates it, and the *Body*, by *Life deriv'd from the Spirit*, cleaves again to the *Soul*: Just so, Christ the *Head*, by his Spirit first actuates the *dead Sinner*, and he thus enliven'd by this *deriv'd Life*, cleaves unto Christ again.

3. 'Tis hence evident, That it has no *Life*, but upon *Christ's Account*, and what is *deriv'd from him*.

4. It actively receives no *Life*, till by *Faith*, it is ingrafted in him, and comes to him.

5. Upon the Sinner's coming to Christ, he receives the *Life of Justification*. He that is absolv'd, especially when in himself he deserv'd to die, receives his *Life*, as he that is condemn'd loses his.

6. By *Faith* we receive the *Life of Sanctification*, and that in a *two-fold Sense*, 1. By our *closing with Christ* or *coming to him*, and the *View* that the Soul then gets of him, the *Principle of Life* form'd in the Soul, gets *Life*, is quick'ned, enliven'd, and Graces are put into *Action*. Till this *View* is got, all lies as it were dead. Also, 2. By the continu'd Exercise of *Faith*, the Increases and daily Supplies of Grace are convey'd for carrying on the *Life of Sanctification*. Thus it is betwixt the *Vine Stock* and *ingrafted Branch*. The *Stock* sends up *quick'ning Influences* to the *Graft*; the *Branch* thus enliv'ned, first cleaves to the *Stock*, and then the *Union* being compleated, and all Conveyances op'ned, *Life* in Abundance is sent from the *Root*, whereby it sends forth *Leaves, Flowers, and Fruit*, each in their Place and Season.

7. The *Life of Comfort* is wholly by *Faith*. And this is the *Life of Life*. There's no *Comfort* but by *Faith*.

8. *Eternal*

8. *Eternal Life* in *Right* and *Possession* are by *Faith*. And this is sufficient to remove this Difficulty.

Obj. V. Does not this make the *Collation of the Spirit* antecedent to *Faith*? And yet 'tis by *Faith* we receive the *Spirit*, Gal. 3. 14.

Ans. 1. The *Spirit* is received *passively* or *improperly* in Order to build us up a meet *Habitation*, lively *Temples*, &c. and we being thus prepar'd, he is *actively* by *Faith* receiv'd, as an *Inhabitant*, to dwell in us, and act in us, as Occasion requires.

2. They who chuse the other Side of the Question, must allow, That the *Spirit* is given to work *Faith*, and so fall under their own Argument.

Obj. VI. Does not this teach, That the *Heart* is purify'd before *Faith*, contrary to *Acts* 15. 9. that tells us the *Heart* is purify'd by *Faith*?

Ans. 1. *Faith* it self is, as Dr. Owen well observes, a principal Part of the restor'd *Image* of GOD, and so of

Dr. Owen of the our Purity. What the Objectors answer to this, *Spirit*, Pag. 290. may be apply'd to the other Parts of the same *Image*.

2. What the *Spirit* of GOD begins in *Renovation* is progressively carried on by the *Exercise of Faith*, drawing purifying Vertue from Christ. And this is the Intent of the Text.

Obj. VII. Is not the *new Creature* begot by the *immortal Seed of the Word*? Or, are we not *born again of incorruptible Seed by the Word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23? Now how can the *Word* have any Effect, without the Interveniency of *Faith*? It does not profit, but as it's receiv'd by *Faith*; therefore *Faith* must be antecedent to the *new Nature*.

Ans. 1. Not to take any Advantage from the additional Clause, fixing the Sense of the *Word* here mention'd, I ask, since *Faith* comes by *Hearing* the Word of GOD, Rom. 10. and the *Word* can have no Influence, but by *Faith*, must not *Faith* be before *Faith*? The Argument is the same.

2. The plain Intent of such Words, in both Cases mention'd, and the like, is, That while, in the Gospel Dispensation, the *Word* is objectively propos'd, and the Mind conversant about it, the *Spirit of the LORD*, using it as the *Instrument, Mean or Channel* of his Influences, works *Faith*, begets or forms the *new Creature*.

A N

ENQUIRY

I N T O

The Nature of GOD'S *Act of* Justification,

TIS generally agreed, amongst *Orthodox Divines*, That the Word *Justification*, as it relates to the *Acquittment* of a Sinner, is to be understood in a *Forensic* or *Law Sense*; and that, by it, we are to understand, a *juridical Act*, whereby, GOD, as *Judge*, upon the *Righteousness* of Christ, does acquit the Sinner, and accept him into Favour. Now, whereas, 'tis certain, That the Sinner is really sifted at GOD's Tribunal, and there accus'd by the *Law*, *Conscience* and *Satan*; and 'tis no less clear, That, upon his *believing*, he is acquit, Sentence passes in his Favours, and he is justify'd by GOD; it may hereon modestly be enquir'd, *How GOD gives out Sentence in the Sinner's Favour?* These Things are not visibly transacted. Nor is the Sentence audibly pronounc'd by any particular Form of Words, in the hearing of the Sinner arraign'd; much less, in the hearing of By-standers. The Question then is, *What is that Act of GOD?* Or, *How does he express that Act absolatory?*

This Question is rarely, and but sparingly touch'd at, by our Divines so far, at least, as I know. And therefore we conceive much Modesty and Sobriety is requisite, in the Determination. Yet, some having deliver'd their Opinion, on this Head, I hope it will be no Presumption to enquire a little into it, providing always, That there be no Attempt, to be wise above what is written, which, our Office, we shall endeavour to guard against.

I find there are different Apprehensions of this Matter, among Divines.

I. Some there are, who distinguish betwixt *sentential* and *constitutive* Justification. The Sinner, say they, immediately upon his believing is *constitutively* justify'd, Rom. 5. 19, by the Gospel Law. Again, he is *sententially* justify'd, when the Judge, at the Day of Judgment, passeth Sentence upon him, acquitting him, according to the said Law.

Thus Mr. Druman expressly delivers himself, denying flatly any Act of GOD, as Judge, according to the said Law. Edit. 2. Pag. 107, 108, 109.

Great Propitiation, admitting of no Act of GOD, but that which is *Rectoral* or *Legislative*, in the Constitution of the new Law of Grace.

This Opinion, however dogmatically deliver'd, as clear and unquestionable, I must confess, does not satisfy me; for several Reasons.

1. The Scripture Representation of the State of the Sinner, at the Time, when he is justify'd, seems unavoidably to require the Interposition of some Act of GOD, applicative of the Law, Rule or Promise (call it which you please, of this I dispute not now) to the Sinner, now personally attack'd, conven'd before the Judge, accus'd and convicted. How such an one can be free, without the Judge's Interposal, on his Behalf, I know not. Nor seems it very easily intelligible. The Sinner's own pleading of the Constitution or Law will not end the Dispute betwixt him and his Accusers, if the Judge is silent; as it never does in the like Cases among Men.

2. Justification is expressly said to be the Act of GOD, Rom. 8. 33. In like Manner, we read of GOD his forgiving of Sin now, or at a definite Time, and not before; which cannot easily be reconcil'd to this Opinion. And I doubt, if the Scripture, designing to set forth such an Act of GOD, could use Terms more significant to this Purpose, than those it has made Use of.

3. This

3. This Opinion seems entirely to deny *sentential Justification*. For, as to that *Justification*, which is commonly so call'd, at the *last Day*, 'tis a Thing altogether different from that, which the Scripture speaks of, under the Name of *Justification* before GOD. The *Judge*, the *State of the Persons*, the *Ground* and *Design* of the *Procedure* are altogether different.

See Dr. Owen on
Justification, P. 223,
224, 225.

4. The *Reformed Churches*, in their *Confessions*, seem harmoniously agreed in this, That *Justification* is an *Act of GOD*, applicative of the *Gospel*, to the *Sinner's actual Relief*, upon his believing, and at the *Time of it*. This, 'tis like, would not have much Weight with the Author, were he alive, who makes no Difficulty, not only to dissent from the *Reform'd Churches*, but also is bold to charge them with talking not very intelligibly, if consistently with themselves. But however, this will have its Weight with sober Spirits.

See *Harmony of*
Confess.

Great Propitiation,
Pag. 168, &c.

II. Others there are, who, besides that *Justification*, by constituting the *Gospel Promise* or *Law*, whereby it's provided, That the Believer shall be justify'd, are willing to admit of another *Act of GOD*, at the *Time of believing*, viz. An *immanent Act*, that is, GOD acquits the Believer in his own Mind. So Mr. Ferguson in his elegant Discourse upon *Justification*.

Ferguson on *Justi-*
fication, Pag. 107.

But neither can I say that this fully satisfies. For

1. The *immanent Acts* of GOD are all eternal, nor are they distinct from GOD himself, as our Divines generally agree: But this *Act of Justification* is at the *Time of believing*, and not before, and has an Effect without him, it terminates on the Sinner, and makes a relative Change.

See as to this Ken-
dal against Goodwine
Part 2. Cap. 4. Digres.
Pag. 138, &c.

2. An *immanent Act* answers not the *End of Justification*, nor comes it up to the Scripture Account of it, which makes it to terminate in *Conscience*, and free the Sinner from any just Impeachment or Accusation, upon the Grounds, whereon formerly he was impleaded and pursu'd,

III. Others there are, who seem to conceive, That this *Act of GOD's Grace justifying a Sinner*, consists in or rather is, his powerful
Applica-

Application or setting Home the Word of Promise, immediately upon the Sinner's first believing on, or accepting of the Lord Jesus.

For confirming this, several Things may be alledg'd, not without some Countenance from the *Word*, as, 1. This *Act* of GOD is unquestionably an *Act of Grace*. 2. The *Word of Promise* is the Channel or Means, whereby all the *Grace* of the Covenant, of whatever Sort, is convey'd to us. 3. 'Tis not the bare *Letter* of the *Promise*; but 'tis the *Promise*, as us'd by the Spirit of GOD, to whom the Application of saving Blessings belongs, that doth effectuate this Conveyance, whether the *Grace* or *Privilege* be in its own Nature *real*, or a Work of Grace wrought in the Soul of the Sinner, or only *relative*, such as Acquittment, and the Change thereby made unquestionably is. The Meaning plainly and shortly is this, The Spirit of GOD, by the *Promise* of *inherent Grace*, produces *inherent* and *real Effects*; such as holy Dispositions, holy Affections, &c. The same Spirit, by the *Promises* of *relative Grace*, and the *Application* of them to the Soul, effectuates a *relative* Change, or produces Effects, which meerly to contradistinguish them from *real* and *inherent*, I may call *moral* or *relative*, such as *Acquittment from Condemnation*, *Right to the Favour of GOD*, and *Privileges of Children*. 4. 'Tis agreed among those who are sound, That at first believing, there is a clear Discovery of Christ Jesus, as held forth in the *Word*, by the Spirit of the Lord, whereby the Soul convinc'd of Sin, is effectually determin'd to close with him, as the *only Way* of Relief. And this *Act* of the Soul is now generally thought to be the *justifying Act of Faith*. 5. It must also be granted, That at the same Time or immediately upon the Back of this, there follows *some Discovery* of the *Security* and *Safety* of the Soul's eternal Concerns, in Adherence to this Way. That there is some such Apprehension, is evident from this one Thing. The most discourag'd Soul, from the first Moment of believing, at its worst Condition, cannot think of giving up with its Interest in this Way, upon any Terms. This can never be accounted for otherwise, than by supposing, That amidst all its Shakings, there is *some Trust*, *Expectation* or *Hope of Salvation* in this Way. 6. The *Ground* of this *Hope*, *Trust* or *Expectation*, certainly is the *Promise* of GOD, clear'd, or set Home by the Spirit of GOD, at the Soul's first closing with Christ. And this *Act* of GOD, setting home the *Promise* to the Believer, as a *Ground of Trust*, and which always does in some Sort relieve, as was noted above, I take to be the *justifying Act* of GOD.

If I should stop here, what has been said wou'd appear too dark and perplext, and wou'd fail with many of giving a due Understanding of the Opinion; much less wou'd it be able to satisfy the Mind as to the *Truth* of it, or answer *Objections*. I shall therefore endeavour to give a clear and distinct Account of what my Thoughts are, which fall in for the Main with this Opinion; which has been but obscurely propos'd, as being gathered from dark Hints in Writing and Conversation.

General Observations laid down for clearing the Way to the Solution of this Question.

IN Order to a distinct conceiving of this Matter, the ensuing Observations wou'd be carefully taken Notice of.

I. *Faith* in the Lord Jesus has some special Influence, be it of what Kind it will, into our *Justification* before GOD.

The constant Use of those Expressions, that we are justify'd by or through Faith, while the like Expressions are not us'd, with Respect to any other Grace or Duty in this Matter, clearly evince what is asserted. *Dr. Owen of Justification, Pag. 148, &c.*

II. The *Subject* of this justifying Faith is a Sinner, cited to and sifted at the Tribunal of GOD, convicted of Guilt, destitute of any valid Defence in himself, and who, in a Word, has his Mouth stopp'd before GOD. No other is capable immediately of this Faith.

III. "The *Object* of this Faith is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as the Ordinance of GOD, in his Work of Mediation for the Recovery and Salvation of lost Sinners, and as, unto that End, propos'd in the Promise of the Gospel. He that would see this fully confirm'd and explain'd may consult the judicious Dr. Owen his Treatise of *Justification*, Chap. 1, 2, 3. *Ibid. Pag. 114, &c.*

IV. The *Acts* of Faith, in Reference to this *Object* requir'd of convinced Sinners, and compriz'd under the general Name of *Believing* in him, are severals,

1st, There is an *Assent* unto the Truths concerning Christ his Nature, Person and Offices, viz. That he is GOD manifested in the Flesh, that he is the Person, whom GOD of his Mercy to Sinners, made choice

choice of, and sent unto the World to recover them, that he is the only Mediator between GOD and Sinners, who is able to save to the uttermost them that come to GOD through him, &c. The Object of this Assent is the Revelation of these Truths in the Word of Promise.

2dly, There is the receiving Act of Faith, whereby we accept of, or receive Christ, John 1. 12. As to which we are to observe distinctly three Things:

First, This receiving of Christ not being capable of the natural or vulgar Sense of the Word, as apply'd to Things external, which are receiv'd by the Hand, &c. it is obvious, it m^ust be taken in a moral Sense. And being thus taken, it points at two Things, or two Acts.

1. It supposes an Act of the Mind or Judgment approving of Christ, as meet for the Purpose, for which he is propos'd.

2. It formally and directly imports the Will's consenting to, closing with, or being pleas'd with him as such. The Mind seeing in him all that's to be desir'd, with Respect to the Case the Sinner is now in; the Will is pleas'd, closes with him, and is satisfy'd, That he is such an one as the Sinner wants.

Secondly, If we consider this Approbation more fully, as apply'd in Practice, it takes in several Things, as,

1. A Renunciation of all other Means, pretending any Usefulness to the same End, and standing in Opposition to, or Competition with Christ, as thus propos'd.

2. The Soul's judging that Christ and he alone, is only, and in all Respects, fitted and design'd for that Work, join'd with a Satisfaction of Mind and Well-pleasedness with him as such.

3. An Acquiescence or Rest of Mind in this Consent; so that the Soul is come to a Point, That it has no other Way to look, and that if it has but him, it is safe.

Thirdly, 'Tis to be observ'd, That the Object of this Act of Approbation is properly the Goodness, Suitableness and Excellency of Christ, as the Means of Recovery of lost Sinners. Now this much for the second Act of Faith.

Trust, Expectation, or fiducial Confidence, as to the Event, follows; and this is what we judge posterior to Justification.

3dly, There

3dly, There is in *Faith*, or there follows upon the foregoing Acts another, *viz.* That which is commonly call'd the *fiducial Act*, or *Trust*, that is, the Soul, in Expectation and Confidence of Relief by Christ, rolls it self upon him. And this may be conceiv'd two Ways; either, 1. More generally, that the Soul seeing, as above, the Vanity of other Ways, and the Safety of *this*, dare build no Expectation any where else, but looks to this as the only Door at which Relief can come in. Or, 2. More particularly, for a confident Trust of *its Salvation in particular* this Way, that is, through Jesus Christ. If the *Former* only be intended, it differs not from that *Acquiescence* above-mention'd; if the *Latter*, to wit, a *Confidence* or *Trust*, that we shall be reliev'd; whether it is more faint or more vigorous, it is indeed, where the other two Acts preceed, a *distinct Act of Faith*.

As to this *last Act*, I shall only observe one Thing, which is, That the Ground of it is the *Promise* or the *Engagement* of the *Faithfulness* of GOD, for the *Salvation* of Believers, and that as *pecially apply'd* by GOD to this Sinner, and the *Application discern'd* by him. This is of great Moment to the clearing the Point in Hand, and shall be afterwards further insisted on.

V. 'Tis disputed, which of these *three Acts* above-mention'd is the *justifying Act of Faith*; that is, the *Act* whereon *Justification* immediately and necessarily ensues, and with Respect to which we are in Scripture said to be justified by *Faith*. The *Papists* generally, and some of our Divines, as Baxter of *Univer. Camero*, particularly, place it only in *Assent*. Of *Redem. Pag. III.* this I shall only say, it runs counter to the Scripture Accounts of this Matter, if it is not so explain'd, as to make it really fall in with one or other of the Opinions after-mention'd. But as to this, our Divines against the *Papists* may be consulted.

Others place it in the *fiducial Act*. And of these some in the *fiducial Act* more generally understood, as has been above noted: And so, in Effect, differ but in Words from them, who make the *second Act* that which justifies. Others, among whom were many of our *first Reformers*, seem, at least, to make the *fiducial Act*, strictly so call'd, to be the *justifying Act of Faith*, *viz.* A *Confidence*, *Perswasion* or *Belief* that our Sins are forgiven. But as to this, I shall only say, 'Tis obvious this can be no Man's Duty to believe so, but upon Supposition, That he is antecedently justify'd by *Faith*.

See Dr. Owen ubi supra. Pag. 138.

Shepherd, sound Believer, P. 196, 197. &c.

Wherefore, others do place it in the *second Act*, which Dr. Owen describes thus, "It is the Heart's Approbation of the Way of Justification and Salvation of Sinners by Jesus Christ, proposed in the Gospel, as proceeding from the Grace, Wisdom and Love of GOD, with its Acquiescency therein, as to its own Condition. This Acquiescency mention'd by the Doctor, is not an Acquiescency as to its own Interest, or a Perswasion of its Salvation in particular, but 'tis to be understood as above-explain'd. The Confir-

Mastricht, P. 53, mation and Explanation of this may be found 55. in the Place above referr'd to, and in the Writings of our Divines, practical and polemical, who generally embrace this Opinion, and with them I agree.

VI. As soon then as the Soul, by a Discovery of Christ Jesus, in the Light of the LORD, convey'd to the Soul in and by the Gospel, is brought to this Approbation of him, *Justification*, or the *Act* of GOD acquitting him, doth immediately ensue. And as to this Act, the Question is, *Wherein it consists?* or, *By what Means is it express'd?* *How does GOD pronounce this Sentence?* And for clearing this Question upon the foregoing Principles, we observe further;

VII. That the *fiducial Act*, or the *Trust* above-mention'd, in one Degree or other, necessarily accompanies, at the same Instant of Time, and follows immediately upon the foregoing Acts of Faith; tho', as was above-observ'd, 'tis not the *justifying Act*, but consequent in Order of Nature thereto. I do not mean that the believing Soul has always, at first closing with Christ, such a steady and full Perswasion that its Sins are forgiven, that eventually it shall be sav'd, as that it dare boldly pronounce and speak out so much to others, or even resolutely assert it within it self; nor do I mean, That it has such a clear View of its own Graces, that it can reflect, and conclude confidently from the Sight of them, its Election, Justification and certain Salvation. To which two Sorts of Perswasion, the one built upon a Reflection on our own Graces, under the Influences of the Spirit of Grace, enabling us to discern them, and conclude from them our Interest in Christ; the other bottom'd upon a Word of Promise, such as that, *Be of good Cheer, thy Sins are forgiven thee*, powerfully set home by the Spirit of GOD; most Part do restrict, how justly, I enquire not now, the Notion of Assurance. But that which I mean, is, That the first, saving Manifestation of Christ to a convinc'd Sinner, pursu'd by the Law, Conscience and Satan, not only determines the Soul to close with him

in the Manner above-mention'd, but thereon also immediately follows such an Expectation, Trust and humble Confidence, as engages the Soul ever after to follow the LORD in a Way of Duty, without despairing as to the saving Issue; yea, not without secret Hope, tho' this afterwards in Times of Temptation, is variously clouded, that in due Time, it shall obtain a merciful Issue. This Perswasion and humble Confidence is really particular as to the Sinner himself and his own Salvation, tho' through the humbling Impressions he has of himself at the Time, his own Guilt, and the Aw he has of GOD upon his Spirit, he fears to express it directly and particularly of himself.

See Dr. Owen on
Psal. 130. P. 280,—
287.

For confirming of this, I shall only hint the few following Things,
1. That which is set before the Soul's Eye at first believing, *viz.* A Discovery, in a supernatural Light, of the Glory of the Grace, Mercy and Love of GOD to Sinners in Christ Jesus, especially considering what the poor Sinner's Circumstances at present are, cannot possibly be suppos'd to have a less Effect. 2. When ever this Discovery, without which *Believing* is impossible, is given or made to the Soul, 'tis impossible but the Soul must be some Way reliev'd; for this is the very Design of the Discovery. Now this Perswasion, as we have stated it, is the least that can be suppos'd in this Matter. Without something of this, the Soul is, in Effect, as it was before. 3. The Experience and Confession of those, who have distinctly observ'd what has past in their Soul at this Time, and Instances of the Word confirm this. 4. When poor disquieted Believers, through the Power of Temptation and Confusion upon their Minds, deny any such Perswasion or Confidence; yet by its Effects, it's evident to others, That at the Time they have it. Doth not their resolute Adherence to Duty, in spight of all Discouragements, and their refusing to quit their Claim, or try other Ways suggested, plainly bewray some such secret Perswasion? 5. To add no more, our gravest and most experienc'd Divines, their placing the *Essence of Faith* in *Assurance*, seems to say, That they were generally perswaded, at least, that this was inseparable from *Justification*. And if they mean'd no more, their Opinion will, upon the strictest Trial, be found unexceptionable.

VIII. This humble Perswasion, Trust, Confidence or Expectation, must be allow'd in Believers, to be an *Act of Faith*, and not a groundless *Presumption*; and if so, it must have some *solid Foundation*.

IX. The Ground of this *fiducial Act* is certainly the *Word of Promise*, whereby GOD engages to pardon, and accept graciously Sinners in Christ Jesus. This the Scriptures many Ways clear. In the *Gospel Call* there is a *Revelation* of Christ to be assented to; an *Offer* or *Proposal* of him, as *worthy of all Acceptation*, to be accepted; a *Command* requiring and warranting this *Acceptance*; and finally, a *Promise* of *Mercy*, or *Salvation* to the *Acceptor*. This last is the Ground of this *fiducial Trust*. *Psal.* 119. 74. 130. 15.

X. Yet the *Word of Promise*, absolutely considered, is not of it self, without the special Application of it to the Soul, able or sufficient to draw forth this *Trust*. The *Promise* must come, not only in *Word*, but in *Power* and in the *Holy Ghost*. 1 *Thef.* 1. 5. GOD, who commanded the *Light* to shine out of *Darkness*, must shine into the Soul, and give that Evidence of the *Faithfulness* of his own Engagement, which only can prevail with the Soul to lay Stress upon it.

XI. Hence it appears evident, That there is an *Act* of GOD, manifesting his *Faithfulness* in the *Promise*, and clearly with *Power* holding forth, and applying his *Mercy* promised for the *Relief* of the *Sinner*, now looking to, and approving of the *Lord Jesus*, as the only *Way* of *Acceptance*.

To prevent any Mistake about this, when I say, That GOD applies, I do not mean, That GOD speaks in Way of an *absolute Promise* or *Assertion*, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, whatever he may do upon some Occasions: But I intend, That at the very same Moment, when the poor trembling convinc'd Sinner is, by a clear Manifestation of the *Mediator*, prevail'd on to give up with all other Ways of *Relief*, and turn his Eye toward him, as alone *worthy of Acceptation*, and who only can be available to poor Sinners in this Case; there is, I say, at that very Instant, tho' in Order of Nature consequent, 1. A *shining Discovery* of *Mercy*, of which the Sinner had no Sight before in that Way. 2. This *Mercy* is particularly held forth to the poor Sinner for his *Relief*; it is set in his Eye as suitable to his present Case. 3. The *Promise* and *Engagement* of GOD is enforc'd upon the Soul, *thou shalt be sav'd*, that is, saving *Mercy* is presently tendered to the poor trembling Sinner.

Now, tho' the Sinner, not yet recover'd out of the *Fright*, which the *Discovery* of his *Misery* immediately before cast him into, dare not always presently go into particular and applicative Conclusions; yet, this *gracious Intimation* begets somewhat of a *humble Confidence*, and

and breaks, for the Time, at least, the Force of the oppressing and confounding Charge, he till then lay under.

XII. Now this *Act* of GOD, above describ'd, may, I conceive, be call'd, and justly thought to be, his *justifying Act*, (or *Act of Acquittment*).

To clear this a little, observe the ensuing Particulars,

1. The close Connection of these Things, as to Time, all being at the same Instant, occasions unavoidably some Difficulty, in the Conception, Observation and Expression of the several distinct *Acts*, either of GOD, or of our own Minds: And this Difficulty is heightened by the Fright the Sinner is in before the Gospel Manifestation, and the Surprisingness of the Manifestation it self. Yet,

2. 'Tis clear, and agreed amongst sound Divines; as for others, we concern not our selves now with them, That there are such *distinct Actings of Faith* at first, that each of them has its proper Foundation; and finally, That the saving Manifestation of GOD's Mercy in the *Promise*, through Jesus Christ, is that which gives Ground for these several Actings.

3. 'Tis upon the Grounds given, evident, That there is such an *Act of GOD*, holding forth *Mercy and Favour*, in and by the *Promise* to the Soul, while it is fixing its Eye upon the Lord Jesus in the Way above-mention'd. I need not stand to confirm this further. There is not, nor can be any Ground sufficient to produce or support the *Trust* above-mention'd, if this is deny'd.

4. That this is an *Act of Acquittment*, appears thus, 1. The Sinner now is at the Tribunal of GOD, ready to sink under the Weight of a heavy Charge, and beat from all his Pleas. 2. The Gospel Discovery seasonably, at that very Instant, proposing the Lord Jesus to View, the Soul's Eye is turn'd wholly there. 3. While he looks here only for Relief, GOD irradiates the Soul with a sweet Manifestation of his *Mercy*, through Christ to Sinners, in the *Promise*. 4. This Discovery made at this Instant to the Sinner, whose Cause is now depending, and who is, as it were, empannel'd, imports no less, than an Intimation of the Judge his Mind as to the Case depending, an Acquittment from the Charge, in Opposition unto Condemnation, or a Discovery and Application of Wrath and the Curse to the Sinner's Conscience, which, in thir Circumstances, wou'd quite overwhelm. 5. This *Act* is sufficient to all the Ends and Purposes of an *Act of Justification*: For, *First*, It repels the Force of the Charge; and in Ex-
perience

perience 'tis found, That this Discovery always, at the Season of it, tho' it cures not all the accidental Consequences of the Sinner's former Cise presently; yet it frees the Soul from that confounding Dread and Despondency he was formerly under. *Secondly*, It endears and lays an everlasting Obligation of Kindness unto GOD, the Sense whereof never goes entirely off the Sinner's Mind, tho' some Occurrences, at some Times, may weaken it. *Thirdly*, The Sinner from this Time forward, has, if not *at all Times* to his own discerning, yet *really*, and oft-times to the discerning of others, a *Liberty of Spirit* from that dispiriting Dread of GOD he was under before, and somewhat, if I may not say of *Confidence*, yet of *kindly Freedom* in his Dealings with GOD. *Fourthly*, This *Act* of GOD not only gives *Right* to Freedom from *all righteous Pursuit* of that Charge, that was but now manag'd in the Sinner's Conscience against him; which, I confess, *ipso Jure*, results, at the Instant of believing, from the Promise: But moreover, it *declaratively* and in a *juridical Way* applies this *Right*, and gives the Sinner a Ground whereupon he justly may, and should claim, insist upon, and make use of, against all Attempts of any who shall endeavour to revive the old Process. *Fifthly*, After this, none by Warrant or Authority from GOD, and in his Name, may or can righteously insist against the Sinner for his *Life*. *Sixtly*, When *Satan* the malicious Accuser, through the Permission of GOD, for wise Ends, litigiously wakens the Pursuit, and importunately vexes the Sinner, there needs no new or different Sentence to silence and repel him: If GOD vouchsafe of his Mercy, to revive the first Discovery, which is like an Extract of the first Sentence, the Soul is instantly quieted, and the Enemy confounded. *Finally*, Immediately upon the Back of this, GOD carries it toward the Soul as a reconcil'd GOD, and this, at first for most part, discernibly; or if it is not discern'd, this flows rather from the Sinner's Weakness, than from want of Evidence. In a Word, upon this Discovery, the Judge appears divested, as it were, of his *terrible Majesty*; the Frowns are no more seen in his Face, but a Pleasantness join'd still with such *Majesty*, as commands at once kindly Thoughts and Respect: The Pannel is no more imprison'd and hamper'd with the fearful Expectation of *Wrath* and *fiery Indignation*, as before, the Pursuers either entirely withdraw and disappear, or, if the litigious Adversary persist, what *Satan* or a *misinform'd Conscience* does now, is only like the malicious Reclaimings, occasion'd by the Disappointment they have met with from the Judge: And to add no more,

more, the poor Man, immediately upon the Back of this, with some pleasant Freedom, goes his Way and falls to his Work.

Whether might not GOD justly have requir'd that *Act* of Faith of every one of the Sons of Men, whereon now by a gracious Promise he has *voluntarily* obliged himself to justify Sinners, although he had made no such Promise?

If he had by a simple doctrinal *Revelation* universally reveal'd Christ Jesus, and the Way of Salvation by him, without promising to justify one or other, or fixing any Terms, but reserv'd these wholly in his own Mind, had not every Sinner been oblig'd to assent to the *Revelation*, and in Judgment approve this as the only Expedient suitable to their Case, and renouncing all other Ways to turn their Eyes to this, reck'ning thus with themselves, *All our Contrivances are vain; here, here is the only suitable Expedient?* Whether GOD will ever vouchsafe to save me I cannot tell; he has kept that to himself; but if ever I am sav'd, this is the Way, and therefore I will look here, and let him do with me what pleases him. Justly may he set me aside; yet if I go elsewhere, it is in vain assuredly: Here is a safe Way, and who can tell but he may be gracious. This I think has the *Acting* of that Faith that is justifying, or it is that *Acting* of Faith that is so.

F I N I S.



INTRODUCTION.

IN this Sceptical Age, which questions almost every Thing, it is still owned as certain, That *all Men must die*. If there were any Place for disputing this, there are not a few, who would spare no Pains to bring themselves into the Disbelief of a Truth, that gives them so much Disturbance, in the Courses they love and seem resolv'd to follow: But the Case is so clear, and the Evidence of this Principle so pregnant, which is every Day confirm'd by new Experiments, that the most resolved Infidel is forc'd, when it comes in his Way, tho' unwilling, to give his Assent, and moan out an *Amen*. *The Grave is the House appointed for all the Living*. Some arrive sooner, some later; but all come there at Length. The Obscurity of the meanest cannot hide him, nor the Power of the greatest screen him from the impartial Hand of Death, the Executioner of Fate, if I may be allowed the Use of a Word so much abus'd. As its coming is plac'd beyond Doubt, so its Aspect is hideous beyond the Reach of Thought, the Force of Expression, or the utmost Efforts of the finest Pencil in the most artful Hand. It, in a Moment, dashes down a Fabrick, which has more of curious Contrivance than all the celebrated Pieces put together, which the most refin'd humane Wits have invented, even when carried to the greatest Height, which the Improvements of so many subsequent Generations, after the utmost of Application and Diligence, could bring them to. It puts a Stop to many Thousand Motions, which, tho' strangely diversified, did all concur, with wonderful Exactness, to maintain, and carry on the Design and Intendment of the glorious and divine Artificer. How this divine and wonderful Machine was first erected, set agoing, and has, for so long a Tract of Time, regularly performed all its Motions, could never yet be understood by the most elevated Understandings. *Canst thou tell how the Bones grow in the Womb of her that is with Child*, is a Challenge to all the Sons of Art, to unfold the Mystery?

Many have accepted it, but all have been foil'd. Something they could say: But, in Spight of it all, the Thing they found a Mystery, they left so still. How can one then look on the *Dissolution* of so admirable a Contrivance, a Machine so curious, and so far surpassing humane Art, without the deepest and most sensible Regret. It untwists that mysterious Tie, whereby Soul and Body were so fast link'd together, breaks up that intimate and close Correspondence, that intire Sympathy which was founded thereon, dislodges an old Inhabitant; and while it lingers, being unwilling to remove, *Death* pulls that curious Fabrick, wherein it dwelt, down about its Ears, and so forces it thence, to take up its Lodgings, it can scarce tell where. And upon its Removal, that curious Fabrick, that a little before was full of Life, Activity, Vigour, Order, Warmth, and every Thing else that's pleasant, is now left a dead, unactive, cold Lump, or disordered Mass of loathsome Matter, full of Stench and Corruption. Now the Body is a Spectacle so hideous, that they who lov'd, and who imbrac'd it before, cannot abide the Sight or Smell of it; but shut it up in a Coffin, and not content with that, away they carry it, and lodge it amongst Worms, and the vilest Insects in the Bowels of the Earth, to be consum'd, devour'd, torn and rent by the most abominable Vermin that lodge in the Grave.

Quantum mutatus ab illo!

We have all heard of the Afflictions of *Job*. Two or three Messengers arrive, each after another, and still the last is worst. Every one tells a Story. The first is sad; but its still more melancholy that follows. The *Disaster* is so terrible, that it fills the World with just Astonishment. And yet after all, what is this to *Death*, which alone is able to furnish Subject, more than enough, for some Thousands of such melancholy Messages! One might bring the dying Man the melancholy Tidings, That he is divested of all his beneficial, pleasant, and honourable Employments: While he is yet speaking, another might be ready to bid him denude himself of all his Possessions: A Third, to continue the Tragedy, might assure him that there is a Commission issued out to an impartial Hand, to tear him from the Imbraces of his dear Relations, without regarding the hideous Out-cries of a loving Wife, the Meltings of tender Infants, the Intercessions of dear Friends: While others continuing still the mournful Scene, might assure him that he was no more to relish the Frangency of the Spring, or taste the Delights of the Sons of Men, or see the pleasant Light of the Sun, or hear the charming Airs of Musick, or the yet more useful Converse of Friends. And to make the Matter sadder

sadder still, if it can well be so, the Story might be shut up with a rueful Account of the parting of Soul and Body, with all the horrible Disasters that follow upon this Parting.

Thus the Case evidently stands. Not a Title of all this admits of Debate. To every Man it may be said, *De te Fabula narratur*. What a Wonder is it, that so grave and important a Subject is so little in the Thoughts of Men? What Apology can be made for the Folly of Mankind, who are at so much Pains to shelter themselves against lesser Inconveniencies, quite overlooking this, that is of infinitely greater Consequence?

Here is the *Light-side* of Death, which every Body may see. What a rueful and astonishing Prospect doth it give us? Where shall we find Comfort against that dismal Day, whereon all this shall be verified in us? He is something worse than a Fool or Mad-man, that will not look to this. And he is yet more mad that thinks, That rational Comfort in such a Case can be maintained upon dark, slender, and conjectural Grounds.

It is certain that which must support, must be something on the *other Side Time*. The one Side of Death affords nothing but Matter of Terror, if we are not enabled to look forward, and get such a Sight of the other, as may ballance it, we may reasonably say, *That it had been better for us never to have been.*

Undoubtedly, therefore, no Question is so useful, so necessary, so noble, and truly worthy the Mind of Man as this. *What shall become of me after Death? What have I to look for on the other Side of that awful Change?*

Those Arts and Sciences which exercise the Industry and Consideration of the greater Part of the thinking World, are calculate for Time, and aim at the Pleasure or Advantage of a present Life. It is *Religion* alone that directly concerns it self in the important Question last mentioned, and pretends to offer Comforts against the melancholy Aspect of Death, by securing us in an Upmaking for our Losses on the other Side Time. Men, who are not blind to their own Interest, had Need therefore to take Care of the Choice of their *Religion*. If they neglect it altogether, as many now do, they forfeit all Prospect of Relief. If they choose a wrong one, that is not able to reach the End, they are no less unhappy. The World may call them *Wits*, or what else they please, who either wholly neglect and laugh over all Inquiries after *Religion*, or who superficially look into Matters of this Nature, and pass a hasty Judgment: But sober Reason will look on them as *somewhat below the Condition of the Beasts that perish.*

It is much to be regreted, that the Bulk of Mankind found their Principles, as well as Practice and Hopes on no better Bottom than *Education*, which gives but too just Occasion for the smart Reflection of the witty, tho profane Poet.

*By Education most have been misled ;
So they believe, because they were so bred.
Hind and Panther. The Priest continues what the Nurse began :
And thus the Child imposes on the Man.*

Most Part seek no better Reason for their Belief and Practice than Custom and Education. Whatever those offer in Principle, they greedily swallow down, and venture all on so weak a Bottom. And this sure is one of the great Reasons why so many miscarry in this important Matter. It is true, in this enquiring Age, many, especially of the better Quality, scorn this Way. But it is to be fear'd that the greater Part of them flying on Extremes, as is common in such Cases, have fallen into another and a worse one, if not to themselves, yet certainly of more pernicious Consequence to the publick. They set up for *Wits* and *Men of Sense*. They pretend to have found out great Mistakes in the Principles of their Education, the Religion of their Country ; and thereon, without more ado, reject it in Bulk, and turn *Scepticks* in Religion. And yet after all this Noise, most of them neither understand the Religion they reject, nor know they what to substitute in its Room, which is certainly an Error of the worst Consequence imaginable to the publick ; since Men once arriv'd at this Pass, can never be depended on. Men may talk what they please. A Man of no Religion is a Man not to be bound, and therefore is absolutely unmeet for any Share in a Society which cannot subsist, if the sacred Ties of Religion hold it not together.

But whatever Course such Persons, on the one Hand or other, steer ; the more considerate and better Part of Mankind, in Matters of so high Importance, will, with the nicest Care, try all, that they may *hold fast what is good*. If a Man once understands the Importance of the Case, he will find Reason to look some deeper, and think more seriously of this Matter, than either the *unthinking Generality*, who receive all in Bulk, without Trial, as it is given them, or, the forward *would-be-wits*, that oft-times are guilty of as great, and much more pernicious Credulity in rejecting all, as the other in receiving all.

But, whereas there are so many different *Religions* in the World, and all of them pretend to conduct us in this important Enquiry ; which of them

them shall we choose? The *Deists*, to drive us into their Religion, which consists only of Five Articles, agreed to, as they pretend, by all the World, would bear us in Hand, That a Choice is impossible to be made of any particular Religion, till we have gone through, with such a particular Examination of every Pretender, and all things that can be said for or against it, as no Man is able to make. *Blount* tells us,

as *Herbert* before had done, That *unless a Man read all Authors, speak with all learned Men, and know all Languages, it is impossible to come to a clear Solution of all Doubts.* And so in Effect, its pretended impossible

Blount Religio Laici, Page 91.

Herbert Religio Laici, Page 12.

to be satisfied about the Truth of any particular Religion. If this Reasoning did hold, I should not doubt to make it appear, That no Truth whatsoever is to be received; and in particular, That their, so much boasted of, *Catholik Religion* cannot rationally be intertain'd by any Man. If we can be satisfied upon rational Grounds about no Truth, till we have heard and considered all, that not only has been said, but may be alledged against it; what Truth can we believe? Here it is easy to observe that some cannot do, unless they overdo. The Intendment of such Reasoning is obvious: Some Men would cast us loose as to all Religion, that we may be brought under a Necessity to take up with any Fancy they shall be pleas'd to offer us; a Man that is sinking will take Hold of the most slender Twig. The Papists have vigorously pursued this Course in Opposition to the Protestants, to drive them into the Arms of their *infallible Guide*. And indeed the learn'd *Herbert* his Reasonings on this Point, after whom the modern *Deists* do but copy, seem to be borrowed from the *Romanists*, and are urg'd upon a Design not unfavourable to the Church of *Rome*, of which perhaps more afterwards.

But to wave this thin Sophistry, any one that will, with a suitable Application, engage in the Consideration of what Religion he is to choose, will quickly find himself eas'd of this unmanageable Task, which the *Deists* would set him. His Enquiry will soon be brought to a narrow Compass, and the Pretenders, that will require any nice Consideration, will be found very few.

For, a very overly Consideration of the *Religions in the Heathen World*, will give any considerate Mind Ground enough to rest fully assur'd, That the desir'd Satisfaction as to *future Happiness*, and the Means of attaining it, are not thence to be expected. Here he will not find what may have the least Appearance of satisfying. The wisest of the Heathens scarce ever pretended to satisfy themselves, much less others, upon these Heads. All

Things

Things here are dark, vain, incoherent, inconsistent, wild, and plainly ridiculous for most Part; as will further appear in our Progress. Their Religions were, generally speaking, calculated for other Purposes, and look'd not so far as Eternity.

Nor will it be more difficult to get over any Stop that the *Religion of Mahomet* may lay in our *Enquirer's* Way. Let a Man seriously peruse the *Alcoran*, and if he has his Senses about him, he cannot but there see the most pregnant Evidences of the grossest, most scandalous and impudent Imposture, that ever was obtruded upon the World. Here he must expect no other Evidence for what he is to believe, but the bare Assertion of one, who was scandalously impious to that Degree, that his own

Followers know not how to apologize for him. If *Alcoran* Chap. 4. you inquire for any other Evidence, you are doom'd by the *Alcoran* to everlasting Ruin, and his Slaves are ordered to destroy you. He forbids any Enquiry into his *Religion*, or the Grounds of it, and therefore ye must either admit in Bulk the entire Bundle of Fopperies, Inconsistencies and choking Absurdities, that are cast together in the *Alcoran*, without any Trial, or reject all: And in this Case, no wise Man will find it hard to make a Choice.

After one has proceeded thus far, he may easily see, That he is now inevitably cast upon one of four Conclusions, either first he must conclude it certain that *all Religion is vain*, that there is nothing to be expected after this Life, and so commence *Atheist*. Or 2dly, He must conclude, That *Certainty is not attainable about these Things*; and so prove *Sceptick*. Or 3dly, He must pretend, That every one's *Reason unassisted is able to conduct him in Matters of Religion*, ascertain him of future Happiness, and direct as to the Means of attaining it; and so set up for *natural Religion*, and turn *Deist*. Or 4thly, He must acquiesce in the *Reveal'd Religion* contain'd in the Scriptures, and so turn *Christian*, or at least *Jew*.

As to the first of these Courses, no Man will go into it, till he has abandon'd Reason. An *Atheist* is a Monster in Nature. That there is nothing to be expected after this Life, and that Man's Soul dies with his Body is a desperate Conclusion, *which ruins the* *Letter to a Deist*, *Foundation of all humane Happiness*; even in the *Page 125.* Judgment of the *Deists* themselves. There are two material Exceptions which are sufficient to deter any thinking Man from closing with it.

The one is the *Hideousness of its Aspect*. Annihilation is so horrible to humane

humane Nature, and has so frightful a Visage to Men who have a Desire of Perpetuity, inlaid in their very Frame, that none can look at it seriously without the utmost Dread. 'Tis true, guilty Atheists would fain take Sanctuary here; yet were they brought to think seriously of the Case, they would not find that Relief in it which they project. I have been credibly inform'd, That a Gentleman of no contemptible Parts, who had liv'd as if indeed he were to fear or hope nothing after Time, being in Prison and fearing Death (tho' he escap'd it and yet lives) fell a thinking seriously, when alone, of *Annihilation*: And the Fears of it had so deep and horrible Impression on his Mind, that he profess'd to a Gentleman, who made him a Visit in Prison, and found him in a grievous Damp, that the Thoughts of Annihilation were so dreadful to him, that he had rather think of a thousand Years in Hell. Guilty Sinners, to ease their Consciences, and screen them from the disquieting Apprehensions of an *After-reckoning*, retreat to this, as a Refuge; but they think no more about it, save only this and that in an overly Way, that it will free them from the Punishment they dread and deserve. But if they would sedately view it, and take under their Consideration all the Horror of the Case, their Natures would recoil and shrink: It would create Uneasiness instead of Quiet, and increase the Strait rather than relieve them from it.

Besides, which is the other Exception against it, were there never so much Comfort in it, as there is none, *Yet it is impossible to prove that there is nothing after this Life*. There is nothing that is tolerable can be said for it. None shall ever evince the Certainty of the Soul's dying with the Body, till he has overthrown the *Being of a God*, which can never be done so long as there is any Thing certain among Men. Further, as there is little or nothing to be said for it, so there is much to be said against it. Reason affords violent Presumptions, at least, for a future State. And all the Arguments, which conclude for the Truth of Christianity, join their united Force, to support the Certainty of a State after this Life. Till these are remov'd out of the Way, there is no Access for any to enjoy the imaginary Comfort of this Supposition. But who will undertake solidly to overturn so many Arguments, which have stood the Test of Ages? They who are likely to be most forward, and favour this Cause most, dare scarce allow these Reasonings a *fair Hearing*, which plead for a future State for Fear of rivetting the Impression of the Truth deeper on their Minds, which they desire to shake themselves loose of. And how then will they overthrow them? In
fine,

fine, he is a Mad-man, who will go into a Conclusion, whereof he can never be certain, and wherein, were it sure, he can have no Satisfaction. The first forbids the *Judgment*, the last dissuades the *Will* and *Affections* from resting in it.

As to the second Conclusion above-mention'd, that sets up for *Scepticism* in Matters of Religion, and bids us live at Peradventures as to what is to be fear'd or hop'd after Time; it is a Course that nothing can justify save absolute Necessity. It lies open to the worst of Inconveniencies. Nothing can be imagin'd more melancholy than its Consequences, and the Pretences for it are vain and frivolous.

If it is really thus, that Man can arrive at no Certainty in Matters of Religion, and about his State a ter Time, how deplorable is Man's Condition? His Case is comfortless beyond what can be well conceiv'd. Nor can his Enjoyments afford him any solid Satisfaction, while ghostly Death looks him in the Face, and the Sword hangs over his Head, supported by a Hair. Will not the Prospect of this rueful Change (of whose dismal Attendants we have given some Account) imbitter his sweetest Enjoyments? And will not the Horror of the Case be much increas'd by resolving upon a perplexing Uncertainty as to what may come after? In how dismal a Plight is the poor Man, who on the one Hand is certain of the speedy Arrival of Death with all it's frightful Attendants; and on the other, is told that he must rove in Uncertainty, till the Event clear him, whether he shall be intirely annihilate, and so plunge into that horrible Gulf where *Atheists* seek Sanctuary! Or if he shall not be hurried headlong into these endless Torments, which the Consciences of guilty Sinners, when awaken'd, presage; or, if he shall soar aloft into Regions of endless Bless, which sinful Mortals have but little Reason to expect; or, finally whether he is not to launch out into some State reducible to none of these. If here we behoove to fix, one would not know how to evite two Conclusions that are horrible to think of; "That our Reason, whereby we are capable of foreseeing, "and are affected with Things at a Distance, is a heavy Curse; and "that the profligate Atheist, who endeavours to mend this Fault, in "his Constitution, by a *continual Debauch*, that never allows him to "think any more of what is certainly to come, than if he were a Brute "incapable of Fore-thought, is the wisest Man.

Beside, as was above insinuate, the Pretences for this Course are vain. 'Tis true, most of those who set up for *Wits* in this unhappy Age, are meer *Scepticks* in Religion, who admit nothing as certain, but

but boldly question every Thing and live at Peradventures. Yet we are not oblig'd to think that this *Scepticism* is the Result of a serious Enquiry, and the Want of Certainty thereon; but those Gentlemens Way of Living is inconsistent with serious Religion; they are therefore desirous to have such a Set of Principles as may, if not favour them in the Practices they have a Mind to follow, yet not incommode them fore. This Principle gives not absolute Security against Impunity; but it *seems*, and *but seems*, to justify them in a present Neglect of Religion, and gives them a *may be* for an Escape from fear'd and deserv'd Punishments; and favours that Laziness that cannot search for Truth, where it lies not open to the Eye, even of those who care not to see it. Their Practice and Course of Life shews them impatient of Restraints, that they love *Liberty*, or rather *Licentiousness*; and are not willing to come under any Bonds. They greedily grasp at any Difficulty that seems to make never so little against Religion; an Evidence that they bear it no real Good-will. They neither converse much with Books, nor Men that may afford them Satisfaction, in Reference to their real Scruples, which is Proof enough they design not to be satisfied. They are light and jocular in their Converſe about the most serious Matters, an Evidence that their Design is not to be inform'd. It is a good Observation of the wise Man, *Prov. 14. 6. A Scorners seeketh Wisdom and findeth it not: but Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth.* This is the real Mystery of the Matter with those Gentlemen, whatever they may pretend.

I know they want not Pretences, taking enough with the unthinking, whereby they would justify themselves in their Infidelity. The principal one is, That they find it easy to load Religion with Abundance of Difficulties, not easily, if at all, capable of Solution. But after all, these Gentlemen use those *Objections* as the *Scepticks* did of old, not so much to maintain any settled Principle, no not their belov'd one, whereof now we speak; as to create them Work and make Sport with those who would seriously confute them, and to ward off Blows from themselves, who have neither Principles nor Practice capable of a rational Defence.

'Tis like indeed that sometimes they may meet with such, who albeit they own Religion, are yet incapable of defending it against such Objections. But this is no Wonder; since there are weak Men of all Persuasions. And their Weakness is, or ought, not to be any real Prejudice to the Truth they maintain. Besides, every one may know that Ignorance of any Subject is fertile of Doubts, and will start Abundance of

Difficulties, whereas it requires a more full and exact Acquaintance with the Nature of Things to solve them; and this falls not to every one's Share.

Further, If this be allowed a reasonable Exception against Religion, That it's liable to Exceptions, not easy to be solved, it will hold as well good against all other Sorts of Knowledge, as against Religion; yea and I may add, it concludes much stronger; for the farther any Subject is above our Reach, the less Reason we have to expect, that we shall be capable of solving every Difficulty that may be started against it. There is no Part of our Knowledge, that is not encumbered with Difficulties, as hard to be satisfyingly solved, as those commonly urg'd against Religion. If this be a sufficient Reason to question Religion, that there are Arguments which may be urg'd against it not capable of a fair, or, at least, an easie Solution; I doubt not, upon the same Ground, to bring the Gentlemen who maintain this, if they will follow out their Principle, to reject the most evident Truths, that we receive upon the Credit of Moral, Metaphysical, and Mathematical Demonstrations; yea, or even upon the Testimony of our Senses. For I know few of these Truths that we receive upon any of those Grounds, against which a Person of a very ordinary Spirit may not start Difficulties, which perhaps no Man alive can give a fair Account of: And yet no Man is so foolish to call in Question those Truths, because he cannot solve the Difficulties which every idle Head may start upon those Subjects. I may give innumerable Instances of the Difficulties wherewith other Parts of humane Knowledge are embarrass'd: I shall only hint at a few.

That Matter is divisible in, or at least, consists of indivisible Points, is with some a Truth, next to self-evident; that the quite contrary is true, and Matter is divisible in *Infinitem*, appears no less certain to many others. But if either of them should pretend themselves capable of solving the Difficulties, that lie against their respective Opinions, it were sufficient to make all Men of Sense and Learning doubt of their Capacity and Judgment: For the Difficulties on both Hands are such,

Lock of humane Understanding, *Edit. 5. Pag. 207.*
 --- I would fain have instanced in our Notion of Spirit

any thing more perplexed, or nearer a Contradiction, than the very Notion of Body includes in it; the Divisibility in *Infinitem* of any finite Extension, involving us, whether we grant or deny it, in Consequences impossible to be explicate, or made in our Apprehensions consistent; Consequences, that carry greater Difficulty, and more apparent Absurdity than any Thing that can follow from the Notion of an immaterial Substance.

such, that no ingenuous Man that understands them, will pretend himself capable of giving a fair Solution of those, which press that Side of the Question he is inclin'd to.

Again, Whether we will, or will not, we must believe one Side, and but one Side of the Question is true; that either Matter is divisible in *Infinitum*, or not; that it consists of Indivisibles or not; these are Contradictions. And it's one of the most evident Propositions that the Mind of Man is acquaint with, That Contradictions cannot be true, or that both Sides of a Contradiction cannot hold. And yet against this Truth, whereon much of our most certain Knowledge depends, insoluble Difficulties may be urg'd: For it may be pretended, that here both Sides of the Contradiction are true, and this Pretence may be enforc'd by the Arguments above mention'd, which confirm the two opposite Opinions, which no *Mortal* can answer. Shall we therefore believe that Contradictions may be true?

That Motion is possible I am not like to doubt, nor can I, while I know that I can rise and walk; nor is he like to doubt of it, who sees me walk. And yet I doubt not the most ingenious of our Atheistical Wits would find himself sufficiently straitned, were the Arguments of *Zeno Eleates* against Motion well urg'd, by a subtile Disputant. I shall offer one Argument against Motion, which I am fully satisfy'd will puzzle the most subtile Adversaries of Religion to solve satisfyingly. There are stronger Arguments proving that Matter is divisible in *Infinitum* than any Mortal can solve or answer, tho' I perhaps believe it untrue. And it is as certain as the Sun is in the Firmament, that if Matter is divisible in *Infinitum*, it consists of an infinite Number of Parts (what some talk of indefinite is a Shelter of Ignorance, and if it is us'd any other Way than as a Shield to ward off Difficulties for a while in a publick Dispute, the Users cannot be excus'd either of gross Ignorance, rooted Prejudice, or Disingenuity.) This being laid down as proven, and proven it may be by Arguments, which none living can satisfie, that Matter is divisible in *Infinitum*, and that consequently it contains an infinite Number of Parts. Nor is it less certain, That according to these Conclusions laid down, if one Body move upon the Surface of another, as for Instance, An Inch in a Minutes Time, it must pass by an infinite Number of Parts; and it's undeniable, That it cannot pass one of that infinite Number of Parts without some Portion of Time; now if so, what a vast Time will it require to make that little Journey, which we know can be perform'd in a Moment? Will it

not evidently require an Eternity? What Difficulty can any urge more difficult to be solved against Religion than this? And yet for all this he were a Fool who would doubt of Motion.

As to Mathematical Certainty, tho' many Boasts are made of the Firmness of its Demonstrations; yet these may, upon this Ground, be call'd all in Question. And I nothing doubt, That if Men's Interests, real or pretended, lay as cross to them, as they are suppos'd to do to the Truths of a Religion, many more Exceptions might be made against them, than are against those, and upon full as good, if not better, Reason. In Justification of this Assertion, I might proceed to demonstrate how trifling even the Definitions of Geometry, the firmest of all the Mathematical Sciences, are. Its Definitions might be alledg'd upon no inconsiderable Grounds trifling, nonsensical and plainly ridiculous. Its Demands or Postulates, impracticable. Its Axioms or self-evident Propositions, controvertible, and by themselves they are controverted. Any one who would see this made good in particular Instances, may consult (besides others) the learned *Huetius* his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, wherein the Illustration of his Definitions, Axioms and Postulates, he compares them with those of Geometry and prefers them to those, and shews they are incumbred with fewer Difficulties than the other, tho' without derogating from the just Worth and Evidence of Mathematical Sciences. Besides what he has observed, I may add this one Thing more, That those Sciences deserve not any great Regard, save as they are applyed to the Use of Life, and in a Subserviency to Man's Advantage. And when thus they are applied to Practice, the Difficulty is considerably increas'd, and they may easily be loaded with innumerable and insoluble Inconveniencies. For then, their Definitions cease to be the Definitions of Names, and are to be taken as the Definitions of Things that are actually in Being. Their Demands must not only be practicable, but put in Practice. And who sees not how many inextricable Difficulties the Practiser will be cast upon? The Demonstration may proceed bravely so long as they hold in the Theory, and mean by *Punctum*, *id cuius Pars nulla est*, and the same may be said of Lines and Surfaces, and all their Figures, without obliging us to believe that really there are any such Things. But when we come to the Practice, they must go further, and take it for granted, that there are such Points, Lines, Surfaces and Figures. This turns what was before only an Explication of a Name, into the Definition of a Thing. And therefore I am now left at Liberty to dispute, Whether there is any such Thing? or, Whether indeed.

indeed it is possible that there should be such? And who sees not now that they are incumbred with as many Difficulties as may perhaps be urg'd against any Science whatsoever.

It were endless to enumerate the Things we must believe, without being capable to resolve the Difficulties about them. The veriest Infidel must suppose that Something is eternal, or all Things are eternal, or that they jump into Being without any Cause. Which ever he shall choose, he is led into a Labyrinth of Difficulties, which no mortal Wit can clear. We must all own, That either Matter and Motion are the Principle of Thought; Or, that there are immaterial Substances which affect Matter, and are strangely affected by what befalls it. Which ever Side any shall choose, he is cast upon inextricable Difficulties. Much more might be said on this Head; but what has been said is more than enough to shew that if this Course is taken, it saps the Foundations of all humane Knowledge, and there is no Part of it safe.

Besides, This Way of questioning Religion upon the Pretence of Difficulties lying against it, is contrary to the common Sense of Mankind, contradicts the Practice of all wise Men, and is inconsistent with the very Nature of our Faculties: For, if I have clear unexceptionable and convincing Proof for any Truth, it's against all Reason to reject it, because I have not so full and comprehensive Knowledge of the Nature and Circumstances of the Object, as is necessary to enable me to solve all Difficulties that may occur about it: Yea, such is the Nature of our Faculties, that to justify in the Opinion of the nicest Enquirers after Truth, nay, to extort an Assent, clear Proof is sufficient: Whereas to untie all Knots, and solve all Objections, perfect and comprehensive Knowledge is absolutely needful; which Man's Condition allows him not to expect about the meanest Things. And the more remote any Thing lies from common Observation, the less Reason there is still to look for a Fulness of Knowledge and Exemption from Difficulties. If therefore Men will turn Scepticks in Religion, to justify themselves, they must attempt the Proofs whereon it is grounded, *Sampson*-like they must grasp the Pillars that support the Fabrick, and pull them down. If this is not done, nothing is done. And he that will undertake this, must have a full View of their Force, and find where their Strength lies: Now a serious View of this will be sufficient to deter any wise Man from the Undertaking.

In a Word this Scepticism can yield no Ease or Satisfaction to a reasonable Soul. For if a Man shall think rationally, his Reason will suggest to him,
That

That tho' all Religion at present seems uncertain to him, yet upon Trial perhaps he may find the Grounds of Religion so evident, that he cannot withhold his Assent: This will at least oblige him to a serious Enquiry into the Truth. Next, In Uncertainties (supposing after serious Enquiry he still thinks the Truths of Religion such) a prudent Man will incline to what is most probable. Finally, He will choose and steer such a Course of Life as will be safest, in Case he shall in Experience afterward find, That there is a God, and a future State, All which shew the Folly of our Scepticks, and, were it seriously considered, would much mar their Design, which is thereby to justify a licentious Life.

Now we have considered, and sufficiently expos'd the two first Branches of the above mentioned Choice; and consequently every Man must find himself cast upon a Necessity of one of two. He must either betake himself to *natural Religion*, and so turn *Deist*; or he must embrace the *Scriptures*, and turn *Christian*: For as to the *Jewish Religion*, it is not likely to gain many *Converts*.

If therefore we are able to demonstrate the utter *Insufficiency of natural Religion*, in Opposition to the *Deists* who set up for it, we reduce every Man to this Choice, That he must be a *Christian* or an *Atheist*; or which is the same upon the Matter, a Man of *no Religion*; For an *insufficient Religion* is in Effect *none*. And to demonstrate this, That *natural Religion* is utterly insufficient, that unassisted Reason is not able to guide us to Happiness, and satisfy us as to the great Concerns of Religion, is the Design of the subsequent Sheets. In them we have clearly stated and endeavoured with Closeness to argue this Point. We have brought the Pleadings of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*, and the *modern Deists*, who do but copy after him, to the Bar of *Reason*, examin'd their utmost Force, and, if I mistake it not, found them weak and inconcludent.

As for the Occasion of my Ingagement in this Controversy, it was not such as commonly gives Rise to Writings of this Nature. I undertook it with no Design of Publication. I was provok'd by no Adversary in particular: But every Man being oblig'd to understand upon what Grounds he receives his Religion, I studied the Point for my own Satisfaction, and in Compliance with my Duty.

As for the Reasons of my undertaking this Part of the Controversy I shall not say much. The only wise GOD, who has determin'd the Times before appointed, and made of one Blood all Nations of Men that dwell on the Earth, has appointed them the Bounds of their Habitation, cut out different Pieces of Work for them, cast them into different Circumstances, and hereby expos'd them to Trials and Temptations that are not of the same Kind

Kind. As every Man is obliged to cultivate in the best Manner he can the Bounds of Land assigned to him, and defend his Possessions; so every one is concern'd to improve and defend after the best Form he may those Truths, which his Circumstances have oblig'd him to take peculiar Notice of, and his Temptations, of whatever Sort, have endeavour'd, or may attempt to wrest out of his Hands.

Besides, We live in a warlike Age, wherein every one must be of a Party in Matters of Religion. And Religion is a Cause, which when disputed, no Man is allowed to stand neutral. As all are concern'd to choose the right Side; so every one is oblig'd to provide himself with the best Armour his Arsenal can afford, both for defending himself and others that own the same Cause, and to annoy the common Enemy. *Nor is this Work peculiarly confin'd unto those, who by Office are obliged to it: For, in publico Discrimine est omnis Homo Miles.*

Besides, It is well known, That the most bold Attempt that ever was made upon reveal'd Religion, since the Entrance of Christianity into the World, has been made, in our Day, by Men, who set up for *natural Religion*, and who have gone over from *Christianity* unto a *refin'd Paganism*, under the Name of *Deism*. Two Things they have attempted, to overthrow *Revelation*, and to advance *natural Religion*. The last Work has been undertaken, I may without Breach of Charity boldly say it, not so much out of any *real Affection to the Principles or Duties of natural Religion*, as to avoid the Odium inevitably following upon a *Renunciation of all Religion*; and because they saw that Men would not easily quit *Christianity* without Something were substitute in its Room, that might at least have the Name of Religion. *Reveal'd Religion* has been worthily defended by many, of old and of late, at Home and Abroad: But the *Insufficiency of natural Religion* has been less insisted on, at least in that Way, that is necessary to straiten an obstinate Adversary. And several Things incline me to think an Attempt of this Nature seasonable, if not necessary, at this Time.

The Times are infectious, and *Deism* is the Contagion that spreads. And that which has taken many, particularly of our unwary Youth, of the better Quality, off their Feet, and engag'd them to espouse this Cause, is the high Pretence that this Way makes to *Reason*. They tell us that their *Religion* is intirely *reasonable*, and that they admit nothing, save what this dictates to them, and they endeavour to represent others as easy and credulous Men. Now I thought it meet to demonstrate, for undeceiving

undeceiving of such, That none are more credulous, none have less Reason upon their Side, than they who set up for *rational Religion*.

Again we have stood sufficiently long upon the defensive Part, we have repuls'd their Efforts against *Revelation*. It seems now seasonable, that we should act offensively, and try how they can defend their own Religion, and whether they can give as good Account of it, as has been given of Christianity. To stand always upon the defensive Part, is to make the Enemy doubt *ours*, and turn proud of their own Strength.

The Reasonableness of this will further appear, if we consider the Quality of the Adversaries we have to do with, and their Manner of Management. The Enemies who have engag'd *reveal'd Religion*, sensible of their own Weakness, to defend themselves at Home, and endure close Fight, do commonly make In-roads, where they expect none, or a faint Resistance. They design not so much to conquer, as to disturb. Jest, Buffoonry, or at best Sophisms and such little Artifices are the Arguments they use, and the Weapons of their Warfare. The best Way to make such Rovers keep at Home is, to carry the War into their own Country, and to ruin those Retreats they betake themselves to when attack'd. They have seen what Christians can say in Defence of *reveal'd Religion*. It is now high Time to see how they can acquit themselves on Behalf of *natural Religion*. It is easy to impugn. It is a Defence that gives a best Proof of the Defender's Skill, and says most for the Cause he maintains.

I own indeed that most, who have evinc'd the Truth of *reveal'd Religion*, have said Something of the Weakness of *natural Religion*. But this has only been by the by, and in a Way too loose to straiten obstinate Opposers, not to speak of the too large Concessions that have been made them by some.

Finally, *natural Religion* being the only Retreat, to which the Apostates from Christianity, betake themselves, and whereby they think themselves secur'd from the Imputation of plain *Atheism*; its hop'd that a full and convincing Discovery of its Weakness may incline such, as are not quite debauch'd, to look how they quit Christianity, and engage with that which, if this Attempt is successful, must hence forward pass for *disguis'd Atheism*.

It now only remains, that I offer some Account of the Reasons that have induc'd me to manage this Controversy in a Method so far different from that which is commonly us'd. The Reasons of this have been above insinuate, and I shall not insist much further on them, lest I should seem

seem to detract from Performances to which I pay a very great Regard. The Method some have chosen, in managing this Controversy with the *Deists*, to me appears inconvenient. They begin with an Endeavour to establish the Grounds of *natural Religion*, and by the Help of Light borrow'd from *Revelation*, they carry the Matter so far, and extend *natural Religion* to such a Compass, that it looks pretty compleat-like: which has too evident a Tendency to lessen its *real Defects*, and make them appear inconsiderable.

Again, I am afraid that some have gone near to give up the whole Cause. This Fault I would be very loth to charge upon all. Many I know have dealt faithfully in it, and deserve Praise. But how to excuse some in this Case I know not. One tells us

that, *Its true indeed, that natural Religion declares and comprizes all the Parts of Religion, that are generally and in all Times either necessary or requisite!*

And much more to the same Purpose. This is much such another Assertion of the Weakness of *natural Religion* against the *Deists*, as the same Au-

thor gives us of the *Perfection of the Scriptures*, in Opposition to the same Persons in another Place of his Book. I could,

says he, *prove, I think, by undeniable, unavoidable Instances, what Mr. Gregory of Oxford says in his*

Preface to some critical Notes on the Scriptures that he published, *There is no Author whatsoever, saith this learned Critick, that has suffered so much by the Hand of Time, as the Bible has.* Is this the Way to overthrow the Sufficiency of *natural Religion* and to defend the Scriptures? This is not the only Remark I could make upon this Author, were it my Design. But this may let us see how necessary it is to deal a little more plainly with the Asserters of *natural Religion*.

Further, to adorn *natural Religion* with the Improvements borrowed from *Revelation*, is the ready Way to furnish those who set up for its Sufficiency, with Pretences to serve their Design, and to straiten themselves, when they come to shew its Defects. And perhaps I should not mistake it far, if I asserted, That the strongest Arguments urged by *Deists*, have been drawn from unwary Concessions, made them by their Adversaries.

And this is the more considerable, that the Persons, with whom we have to do in this Controversy, are, generally speaking, either of no great discerning, or small Application; who have no great Mind to

*Discourse concern-
ing natural and Re-
veal'd Religion, by
Stephen Nye, Part
2. Chap. 1. Page 97.*

ubi supra, Page 199.

wait upon the Business, or look to the Bottom of it : Now when such Persons find many Things granted, they are ready to think all is yielded, and so run away with it, as the Cause were their own. That such Concessions have done no good Service, there is too much Reason to believe. This I am sure of, it would have been long before the *Deists* could have trimm'd up *natural Religion* so handsomly, and made it appear so like a *sufficient Religion*, as some have done, who mean'd no such Thing.

Finally, The Apostle *Paul's* Method is doubtless most worthy of Imitation, who, when he is to prove Justification by Faith, and inforce an Acceptance of it, strongly convinces of Sin, and the utter Insufficiency of Works for that Purpose. The best Way, in my Opinion, to engage Men to close with *Reveal'd Religion*, is strongly to argue the *Insufficiency of natural Religion*.

As to the Performance it self, and what I have therein attain'd, I am not the Judge competent. Every Reader must judge as he sees Cause. I have not the Vanity to expect that it should please every Body. The vast Compass of the Subject, the Variety of the Purposes, the Uncommonness of many, if not most of them, with Respect to which I was left to walk in untrodden Paths, and other Difficulties of alike Nature, with candid and judicious Readers will go a great Way toward my Excuse in lesser Escapes. As for the Substance of the ensuing Discourse, I am bold to hope, that upon the strictest Trial it shall be found true, and pleaded for in Words of Truth and Soberness.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Giving a short Account of the Rise, Occasion, and Progress of Deism, especially in England, the Opinions of the Deists, and the different Sorts of them.



HERE is no Man, who makes it his Concern to understand what the *State of Religion* has, of late Years, been, and now is, particularly in those Nations, but knows that *Deism* has made a considerable Progress. Since therefore it is against those, who go under *this Name*, that this Undertaking is design'd, it is highly expedient, if not plainly necessary, that in the Entry, we give some Account of the *Occasions, and Rise of Deism*, the principal Opinions of the *Deists*, and some other Things that may tend to clear the Matter discours'd in the subsequent Sheets.

It is not necessary that we enquire more largely into the Causes of that general Defection in *Principle and Practice* from the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*, which now every where obtains; this has been judiciously done by others.

Nor will it be needful to write at Length the *History of Deism*. This I think impracticable, because the Growth of this *Set* has been very secret, and they have generally disguis'd their Opinions: And perhaps till of late, they scarce had any settled Opinion, in Matters of *Religion*, if yet they have: But tho' it were practicable, as it is not, yet is not necessary to our present Undertaking; and if it were attempted, would require mo Helps, and more Leisure, besides other Things, than I am Master of.

One has of late written a Pamphlet bearing this Title, *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England*. The Author, if he is not a *Deist*; yet has done what in him lies to promote their Cause, by

Growth of *Deism* printed Anno 1696.

setting off, with all the Art and Address he is Master of, those Things, which, he says, have tempted many to turn *Deist*, without any Attempt to antidote the Poison of them.

Another has write *Reflections* upon this Pamphlet, wherein he has sufficiently shown that those alledged, by the former Author, were not *sufficient Reasons* to justify any in turning *Deist*: But I conceive that is not the main Question. If he had a Mind to disprove the other Author, he should have made it appear, that the Particulars, condescended upon by his Antagonist, had no real Influence into this Apostacy.

Reflections on a Pamphlet intituled, An Account of the Growth of Deism 1696.

Whether they gave a just Cause for it, is another Question. I am satisfied they did not. But neither do those *Reasons* of this Defection, condescended on by the *Reflector*, give a sufficient Ground for it. Nor are there any *Reasons* that can justify any in relinquishing *Christianity*. The Inquiry in this Case is not what just Grounds have the *Deists* to warrant them in, or engage them to this Defection: For all Christians own it impossible they should have any. But the Question is, What has given Occasion to any, thus to fall off from *our Religion*. Now I conceive both these Writers have hit upon several of the *true Reasons* of this; tho' the first is apparently guilty of *deep Imprudence*, I wish I might not say, *Malice* against *Christianity*, in proposing those Temptations, with all the Advantage he could give them, and that without any Antidote: For which and other Faults he has been justly, tho' modestly, censur'd by the *Reflector*.

Albeit both of them have given some Account of this Matter; yet, I conceive so much has not been said, as may supersede a further Inquiry, or make us despair of observing not a few Things that have not had an inconsiderable Influence, which are overlook'd by both. Wherefore we shall in few Words propose our Opinion of this Matter. And in delivering it, we shall not pursue the Design of any *Party*, but make it evident that all *Parties* have had their own Accession to the *Growth* of this *Evil*; tho' I am sensible that this Account will fall heavy upon

See Bishop of Sarum his Explanation of the 39 Articles on Art. 17. Page 168.

a Set of Men in particular, who have of late Years claim'd the Name of the *Church of England*, tho' unjustly, if we take her *Homilies*, *Articles*, and the consentient Judgment of her renowned Bishops from the Time of the Reformation to Bishop Laud's Time, for the Standard of her *Doctrine*: I see no Reason

Reason why we ought not. I premis'd this to avoid any Suspicion of a Design to brand the *Church of England*, with an Accession to the *Growth of Deism*. And even in speaking of that Set of Men, whom I take to be principally guilty, I would not be understood to speak so much of the *Design* of the *Men*, as of the *native Tendency* of their *Doctrine* and *Practices*.

The many groundless, nay ridiculous Pretences to *Revelation*, and bold Impostures of the *Church of Rome*, and of those who have supported that Interest; their Impudence in obtruding upon the World, Doctrines cross to *Reason* and *Sense*; and Principles of *Morality* subversive of the whole *Law of Nature*: Their scandalous Endeavours to bespatter the *Scriptures*, and weaken their Authority, on Purpose to bring them into Discredit; to make Way for the design'd Advancement of their *wild Traditions* into an Equality with them; and to bring the World under a Necessity of throwing themselves upon the Care and Conduct of their pretended *infallible Guide*; tho' they cannot yet tell us which is he. Their gross and discernible Hypocrisie in carrying on secular, nay impious and unjust Designs, under the specious Pretences of *Holiness* and *Religion*: Their Zeal for a *Form* and *Show* of *Religion*, a Worship plainly *Theatrical*; while the Lives of their *Popes*, *Cardinals*, *Monks*, *Nuns*, and all their highest Pretenders to Devotion have been scandalously leud, even to a Proverb: The *immoral Morality*, *Atheistical Divinity*, and *abominable Practices* of the *Jesuits*, those zealous Supporters and strongest Props of the *Popish Interest*, but in very Deed the worst Enemies of Mankind, the Subverters of all *true Piety*, *Morality* and *Government* in the World; these, I say, together with many other Evils of a like Nature, every where observable in that Church, have been, for a very long Time, too evident and gross to be deny'd, or hid from Persons of any tolerable Sagacity, living among them. And, by the Observation of those and the like Evils, continu'd in, approv'd, justify'd and adher'd unto; and the Cruelty of that Church, in destroying all those, who would not receive, by Whole-sale, all those choking Absurdities, not a few who liv'd among them, and were unacquainted with the *Power of Religion*, that was necessary to engage them cordially to espouse the *Reformed Interest*, got their Minds leavened with Prejudices, and furnish'd with specious Pretences against all *Reveal'd Religion*: Which

Growth of Deism,
Page 5.
Reflections on it, Pag.
8.

See *Jesuits Morals.*

Clarkson's *Practical*
Divinity of Papists.

Which they the more boldly entertain'd, because they knew it was less criminal to turn *Atheist* than *Protestant* in Places where the *Popish Interest* prevail'd.

Those Prejudices once taken up, daily grew stronger, by the Observation of new Instances of this Sort, and the Constancy of those of that Communion in acting the same Part. And Men of *Wit* and *Learning*, who soonest saw into this Mystery, and had no inward Bonds on them, fail'd not to hand about and cultivate those Pretences to that Degree, that many begun to own their Apostacy, if not openly, yet more covertly.

Not long after the Beginning of the last elapsed Century, so far as I can learn, some in *France* and *Italy* began to form a Sort of a new Party. They call'd themselves *Theists*, or *Deists*, unjustly pretending that they were the only Persons who own'd the *One true God*. And hereby they plainly intimated that they had rejected the Name of *Christ*. They rejected all *Revelation* as *Cheat*, *Priest-craft* and *Imposture*, pretending that there was nothing sincere in *Religion*, save what *Nature's Light* taught. However, being generally Persons too fond of a present Life, and too uncertain about a future, they thought it not meet to put too much to the Hazard, for this their *pretended Religion*. It was a refin'd Sort of *Paganism* which they embrac'd, and they were pleas'd to imitate the *Heathen Philosophers*, who, whatever their peculiar Sentiments were in Matters of *Religion*; yet for Peace-sake, they look'd on it as safe to follow the Mode, and comply with the Religious Usages that prevail'd in the Places where they liv'd. That which made this Party the more considerable was, that it was made up of Men, who pretended to Learning, Ingenuity, Breeding, and who set up for *Wits*. They pretended to write after the Copy of the new *Philosophers*, who scorn'd that Philosophical Slavery, which former Ages had been under to *Aristotle*. They inculcated that Credulity was no less dangerous in Matters of *Religion*, than in Matters of *Philosophy*. And herein certainly they were not mistaken. But one may justly suspect, That at the same Time, while they pretended to guard against Easiness in Believing, they have fallen into the worst *Credulity*, as well as ruining *Incredulity*. For *none is credulous as an Atheist*.

Much about the same Time, some novel Opinions began to be much entertain'd in *Holland*, in Matters of Religion. The Broachers of them, being Men learn'd and diligent, carefully cultivated them, till they were ripen'd into something very near-akin to plain *Socinianism*, which

is but one Remove from *Deism*. It was not long after this when those new-tangl'd Notions took Footing in *England*, and began to be embrac'd and countenanc'd by some topping *Church-men*, who, forgetful of their *Articles*, *Homilies*, *Subscriptions*, and the Conduct of their Predecessors, carefully maintain'd, and zealously propagated this new Divinity.

I shall not make bold to judge what the Designs of those were, who appear'd most zealous for those new Notions: This is to be left to the Judgment of him, who *searches the Hearts of the Children of Men*, and will bring forth Things that are now hid. But there were not a few Reasons to suspect that the *Jesuits* had a considerable Hand in disseminating them, and that others were their Tools, tho' it's likely they did not suspect this. The *Jesuits* vaunted that they had planted the Sovereign Drug of *Arminianism* in *England*, which in Time would purge out the *Northern Heresie*. This it could not otherwise do, than by shaking Men as to all Principles of Religion. And it's a known Maxim, That make Men once Atheists, it will be easy to turn them Papists.

Rushworth's Collect.
Part 1. P. 475. Letter
by a Jesuit to the
Rector at Brussels,
see Pag. 62. *ibid*.

The Jealousies many discerning People had of this, were considerably increas'd, when it was seen with what Violence the Abettors of this new Divinity appear'd against the more moderate Part of the *Church of England*, as well as the *Dissenters*, upon the Account of some Ceremonies own'd by themselves as indifferent in their own Nature: While at the same Time, they express'd a great Deal of Tendernefs, if not Respect to the *Church of Rome*, and made Proposals for *Union* with her.

But whatever there is as to this, 'tis certain that this Divinity opens a Door, and has given Encouragement to that Apostacy from Christianity, that has since followed, and still increases, under the Name of *Deism*.

This Divinity teaches us, that no more is necessary to be believ'd, in Order to Salvation, save what is confess'd and own'd by all that are call'd *Christians*. *Dicunt se non videre unde, aut quo modo, præter pauca ista, quæ apud omnes in confesso sunt, alia plura adhuc necessaria esse ostendi aut elici possit*; that is, They see not how it can be made appear, that besides these few Things, which are necessary to Salvation. Consonantly hereto, they expressly deny any Thing to be fundamental, which has been controverted, or afterwards may be so. In a Word, they teach that we are not necessarily to believe any Thing, save what is e-

Remonstr. Apol.
Fol. 12.

Ibi Cap. 24. Fol.
276. and Cap. 25.
Fol. 283.

vident to us. And that only is to be reck'ned evident, which is confessed by all, and to which nothing that has any Appearance of Truth can be oppos'd. Now after this, What is left in *Christianity*? The *Divinity*, the *Purity*, the *Perfection* and *Sufficiency* of the *Scriptures*; the *Trinity*, *Deity of Christ*, *his Satisfaction*, the *whole Dispensation of the Spirit*, *Justification by Faith alone*, and all the *Articles* of the *Christian Religion*, have been and are controverted. None of them therefore is necessary to Salvation. Are not Men left at Liberty, without Hazard of their Salvation, to renounce all, save what is common to *Christianity*, with *natural Religion*? And since even some of its most considerable Articles about the *Attributes* of GOD and his *Providence*, *future Rewards* and *Punishments* have been, or may be controverted, why may we not reckon them unnecessary too? The *Deists* have borrowed their *Doctrine of Evidence*, and oppos'd it to the *Christian Religion*.

Oracles of Reason, *One of them tells us, If our Happiness depends upon our Belief, we cannot firmly believe, till our Reason be convinc'd of a Supernatural Religion: And*
 Page 206. Letter by *if the Reasons of it were evident, there could*
 A. W. to C. Blount. *be no longer any Contention about Religion.*
 How little does this differ from that *Divinity*, which tells us, That GOD is oblig'd to offer us such Arguments to which nothing that has an *Appearance of Truth* can be oppos'd! And if this be wanting, they are not to be receiv'd as *Articles of Faith*. Now if after this, the *Deists* can but offer any Thing that has an *Appearance of Truth* against *Christianity*, they are free to reject it in *Cumulo*.

This *Divinity* reduces *Christianity* to *meer Morality*. Nothing else is universally agreed to, if that be so. *The Supposition of Sin, (says one that wore a Mitre) does not bring in any new Religion, but only makes new Circumstances and Names of old Things, and requires new Helps and Advantages to improve our Powers, and to encourage our Endeavours: And thus the Law of Grace is nothing but a Restitution of the Law of Nature.*
 S. Park's Defence of Eccles. Poli. Page 324.

And further, Lest we should think this *Morality*, wherein they place the Whole of *Christianity*, owes its *Being* to the Agency of the Sanctifying Spirit, we are told, That the Spirit of God, and the Grace of Christ, when us'd as distinct from moral Abilities and Performances, signify nothing.
 Idem ibid. Pag. 343. And a Complaint is made of some, who fill the World with a Buz and Noise of the Divine Spirit.
 Eccles. Polit. Pag. 57. Hence

Hence many Sermons were rather such as became the Chair of a *Philosopher*, teaching *Ethicks*, than that of one, who by Office is bound to know and preach *nothing save Christ and him crucify'd*. *Heathen Morality* has been substitute in the Room of *Gospel Holiness*. And *Ethicks* by some have been preach'd instead of the *Gospel* of Christ. And if any Complaints were made of this Conduct, tho' by Men who preach'd the Necessity of Holiness, urg'd it by all the *Gospel* Motives, and carefully practis'd what they preach'd in their Lives, they were expos'd and rejected, and the Persons, who offered them, were reflected on, as Enemies to *Morality*; whereas the plain Truth of the Case was, they did not complain of Mens being taught to be *moral*; but that they were not taught somewhat more.

After Men once were taught that the controverted *Doctrines* of Religion were not necessary to Salvation, and that all that was necessary thereto, was to be referr'd to and comprehended under *Morality*, and that there was no Need of *Regeneration*, or the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of Christ in Order to the Performance of our Duty, it is easy to see how light the Difference was to be accounted betwixt a *Christian* and an honest *moral Heathen*. And if any small Temptation offered, how natural was it for Men to judge that the Hazard was not great, to step over from *Christianity* to *Deism*, which is *Paganism a-la-mode*. And to encourage them to it, 'tis well known how favourably many us'd to express themselves of the State of the *Heathens*: Little minding that the *Christian Religion* represents them as *without God*, and *without Christ*, and *without Hope*, *Children of Wrath*, and *dead in Trespasses and Sins*.

I need not stand to prove that *this Divinity* is nearly ally'd to *Socinianism*. It is well known that they reckon the *Socinians* sound in the Fundamentals, and therefore think them in no Hazard, provided they live morally. Hence Men have been emboldned to turn *Socinians*. And every Body may see, by what easy Removes, one may from *Socinianism* arrive at *Deism*. For my Part, I can see little Difference betwixt the two. The *Deist* indeed seems the honester Man of the two: He rejects the *Gospel*, and owns that he does so: The other, I mean, the *Socinian* pretends to retain it, but really rejects it. But I shall not insist any further in discovering the Tendency of this *new Divinity* to *Libertinism* and *Deism*, since others have fully and judiciously done it from the most unquestionable Arguments and Documents. And more especially, since in Fact, it is evident, That where ever this *new Divinity* has obtain'd, *Socinians* and *Deists* abound, and many who embrace it,

daily go over to them; which I take to be the surest Evidence, if it be duly circumstantiated, of the Tendency of this Doctrine, to encourage those Opinions, and least liable to any just Exception. And perhaps I might add, That few, comparatively very few, who own the contrary Doctrine, have gone into this *new Way*, where *that Divinity* has not been entertain'd.

But to return, whence we have for a little digress'd, to the *State of Religion in England*. No sooner were they advanc'd to *Power*, who had drunk in those Opinions, but presently the Doctrines that are purely Evangelical, by which the *Apostles* converted the World, the *Reformers* promoted and carry'd on our Reformation from *Popery*, and the pious Preachers of the Church of *England* did keep somewhat of the Life and Power of Religion amongst their People; these Doctrines, I say, began to be decry'd, *Justification by the Righteousness of Christ*, which *Luther* call'd *Articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesie*, that *Redemption that is in him, even the Forgiveness of Sins through Faith in his Blood*; the *Mystery of the Grace, Mercy and Love of God manifested in Christ*; the great *Mystery of Godliness*; the *Dispensation of the Spirit for Conviction, Renovation, Sanctification, Consolation and Edification* of the Church by a Supply of spiritual Gifts and other Doctrines of a like Tendency, were, upon all Occasions, boldly expos'd, discredited in Press and Pulpit. The Ministers who dar'd to avow them from a Conviction of the Truth, the Sense of the Obligation of their Promises and Subscriptions to the *Articles*, were sure to have no Preferment, nay to be branded with the odious Names of *Calvinists, Puritans, Fanatics*, and I know not what.

The *Doctrines of Faith* were not regarded as belonging to the Foundation of *Religion*. The *Morality* of the Bible was pretended the only Thing that was necessary, and as much of the Doctrine, as all, even *Socinians, Quakers*, and all the rest were agreed in, sufficient: And if any oppos'd this, tho' in civil Language and by fair Arguments, they were sure to be expos'd as Enemies to *Morality*, albeit their Adversaries durst not put the Contest on this Issue with them; that he should be reckon'd the greatest Friend to *Morality*, who was most blameless in his Walk, and shew'd it the greatest practical Regard. They could exercise *Charity, Forbearance and Love* to a *Socinian* that has renounced all the fundamental Truths of *Religion*; but none to a poor *Dissenter*, who sincerely believ'd all the *Doctrinal Articles*; nay, even a sober Church-man, who could not consent to new unauthoriz'd Ceremonies,

monies, was become intolerable. So that Men, at this Time, might, with much more Credit and less Hazard, turn Socinian or any Thing, than discover the least Regard to Truths contain'd in the *Articles*, own'd by most of the *Reform'd Churches*, and taught by our own *Reformers*. This is too well known to be deny'd by any one who knows how Things were carry'd on at that Time and since.

Further, Whereas *Preachers* formerly, in Order to engage Men to a Compliance with the Gospel, were wont to press much upon them their *Guilt*, the *Impossibility of standing before God*, in their own *Righteousness*, their *Impotency*, their *Misery by the Fall*, the *Necessity of Regeneration*, *Illumination*, the *Power of Grace* to make them willing to comply, and that no Man could sincerely call *Christ Lord*, and be subject to him practically, *save by the Holy Ghost*: Care was now taken to unteach them all this, and to shew them how very little they had lost by the Fall, if any Thing was lost by it, either in Point of *Light* to discern, or *Power* and *Inclination* to practise Duty. They were told how great Length their own *Righteousness* would go, and that it would do their Business; they might safely enough stand before GOD in it; or if there was any Room for *Christ's Righteousness*, it was only to piece out their own, where it was wanting. In a Word, the People were told, what fine Persons many of the *Heathens* were, who knew nothing of *Illumination*, *Regeneration*, for what the Bible was, and how little Odds, if any at all, there was betwixt *Grace* and *Morality*.

And, whereas a Veneration for the *Lord's Day* was a Mean to keep People under some Concern about *Religion*, and that Day was spent by faithful Ministers, in pressing upon the Consciences of their People, those new condemn'd Gospel Truths, to the spoiling of the whole Plot; Care was taken to discredit and bring it into Contempt. Ministers, instead of telling them on that Day, That they were naturally inclin'd to *Sin*, *Levity*, *Folly* and *Vanity*, were commanded to deal with them as Persons too much inclin'd to be serious, and instead of preaching the Gospel, they were requir'd, under the highest Pains, to entertain them

Any one that would be satisfy'd in the Truth of this, must peruse the Sermons and Writings published by that Party of old and of late, and the Histories of those Times, particularly Rushworth's Collect. the Speeches of the long Parliament, and later Writings, and they will find Documents no than enough. And they may consult also Honorii Reggii his Comment. de statu Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ.

Rushworth's Col-
lect. Part 2d. Vol. 1.
Pag. 459.

Bishop of Sarum
on the Articles,
Article 7. Page 152.

with a profane *Book of Sports*. And for Disobedience many were ejected. And that they might be taught by Example as well as Precept, a *Sunday's Evening Mask* was publickly acted, where were present Persons of no mean Note.

Moreover, a State Game being now to be played, the *Pulpit, Press, Religion* and all were made basely to truckle to *State Designs*, and to the Inslaving of the Nations, by advancing the Doctrines of *passive Obedience, Non-resistance* and *Jure-divino-ship* of Kings; whereby Men of Religion were wounded to see the Ordinances of Christ prostitute to such Projects, as were entirely foreign, to say no worse, to the Design of their Institution: And Men of no Religion, or who were not fix'd about it, were drawn over to think it a meer Cheat; and that the Design of it was only to carry on secular Interests under specious Pretences.

At Length by those Means and some other Things, which are not of our present Consideration concurring, Confusions rip'ned into a *Civil War*, whereby every one was left to speak, write and live as he pleas'd.

Many who intended no Hurt, while they upon honest Designs, enquir'd into, and laid open the Faults of the *topping Clergy*, did unaware furnish loose and atheistical Men with Pretences against the Ministry: And what in Truth gave only Ground for a Dislike of the *Persons* faulty, was receiv'd by many as a just Ground of Prejudice against the very *Pastoral* as *Priest-craft*, and all who are cloth'd with it, as a Set of self-designing Men.

The Body of the People, who had been debauch'd by the Example of a *scandalous Clergy*, and hardned in Sin by the Intermision of all *Discipline*, which of late had only been exercis'd against the sober and pious, who could not go into the Measures that were then taken, the Neglect of painful Preaching, the *Book of Sports and Pastimes*; and who had their Heads fill'd with the airy and self-elating Notions of Man's *Ability to Good, Free-will, universal Grace*, and the like, and who now, when they much needed the Inspection of their faithful Pastors were depriv'd of it, many of them, by the Iniquity of the Times, being forc'd to take Sanctuary in foreign Nations. The People, I say, by these Things turn'd quite giddy, and broke into numberless *Sects* and Parties. Every one who had intertain'd those giddy Notions was zealous, even to Madness,

ness, for propagating them, and thought himself authoriz'd to plead for them, print for them and preach them. The Office of the *Ministry*, that had before been rendred contemptible, by the Suppression of the best *Preachers*, and the scandalous *Lives* of those who were mainly encouraged, was now made more so, by the Intrusion of every bold, ignorant and assuming *Enthusiast*. The Land was fill'd with Books of Controversy stuff'd with unsound, offensive and scandalous Tenets, which were so multiply'd, as they never, have been in any Nation of the World, in so small a Compass of Time. The Generality of the People being, by the Neglect of a scandalous *Ministry*, and the Discouragement of those, who were laborious, drench'd in Ignorance, were easily shaken by those controversial Writings that were disseminate every where, and became an easy Prey to every bold *Sectarian*.

Many of the better Sort set themselves to oppose these Extremes, and from a Detestation of them, were carried, some into one Evil, some into another. Whereby the common Enemy reap'd Advantage, and *Truth* suffer'd even by its Defenders. Ministers who desir'd to be faithful, by the abounding of those Errors, were forc'd to oppose them in publick: Whereby Preaching became less edifying, and Disputes increas'd to the great Detriment of *Religion*.

The Nation was thus crumbled into Parties, in Matters both Civil and Religious, the Times turn'd cloudy and dark: Pretences of Religion were dreadfully abus'd on all Hands to subserve other Designs. And even the best both of Ministers and People wanted not their own sad Failings, which evil Men made the worst Use of. The *Word* and *Providence* were us'd in Favours of so many cross Opinions and Practices, that not a few begun to run into that same Extreme, which some in *France* and *Italy* had before gone into. And about this Time it was that the learn'd *Herbert* began to write in Favours of *Deism*: Of whom we shall have Occasion to speak afterwards.

After the *Restoration*, Things were so far from being mended, that they grew worse. *Leudness* and *Atheism* were encouraged at the Court, which now looked like a little *Sodom*. The Clergy turn'd no less scandalous, if not more than before. Impiety was, as it were, publicly and with Applause acted and taught on the Stage, and all serious Religion was there expos'd and ridicul'd. Yea the Pulpits of many became Theatres, whereupon Men assum'd the Boldness to ridicule serious Godliness, and the gravest Matters of Religion, such as *Communion with GOD*, *Confession of Sin*, *Prayer by the Spirit*, and the whole *Work of Conversion*: Controversial Writings were multiply'd, and in them
grave

grave and serious Truths were handled in a jocular Way. The *Scriptures* were burlesqu'd, and the most important Truths, under Pretence of exposing the *Dissenters*, to the great Grief of all good Men among them, and in the *Church of England*, were treated with Contempt and Scorn. The Pulpits were again prostitute to *State Designs* and *Doctrines*; and the great Truths of the *Gospel*, in Reference to *Man's Misery*, and his *Recovery by Jesus Christ*, were intirely neglected by many: And Discourses of *Morality* came in their Place, I mean a *Morality* that has no Respect to Christ as its *End*, *Author* and the *Ground of its Acceptance with GOD*, which is plain *Heathenism*. The soberer, and the better Part were traduc'd as *enthusiastical*, *disloyal Hypocrites*, and I know not what. And sometimes, they on the other Hand, in their own Defence were constrain'd to lay open the *Impiety*, *Atheism* and *blasphemous Boldness* of their *Traducers* in their Way of Management of divine Things. And while Matters were thus carry'd betwixt them, careless and indifferent Men, especially of the better and most considerable Quality, being debauch'd in their Practice, by the Licentiousness of the *Court*, the *Immorality* and *Looseness* of the *Stage*, were willing to conform their Principles to their Practice, for which this State of Things gave them a favourable Occasion and plausible Pretences. Men whose Walk and Way look'd like any Thing of a real Regard to *Religion*, they heard so often traduc'd as *Hypocrites*, *Fanaticks*, and I know not what, that they were easily induc'd to believe them to be such. They who taught them so, on the other Hand, by the Liberty they assum'd in Practice, convinc'd these Gentlemen, That whatever their Profession was, yet they believed nothing about *Religion* themselves: And therefore it was easy to infer that all was but Cheat. Besides the *Papish* Party, who were sufficiently encourag'd, while the sober *Dissenters* of the Protestant Perswasion were cruelly persecuted, made it their Business to promote this Unsettledness in Matters of *Religion*. They found themselves unable to stand their Ground in Way of fair Debate, and therefore they craftily set themselves, rather to shake others in their *Faith*, than directly to press them to a Compliance with their own Sentiments. And it is well known they wrote many Books full of Sophistry, plainly levelling at this, to bring Men to believe *nothing*; as well knowing that if they were once brought there, they would soon be brought to believe *any Thing* in Matters of *Religion*.

On these and the like Occasions and Pretences, arose this Defection from the *Gospel*, which has been nourished by many of the same Things, which

which first gave it Birth, till it is grown to such Strength, as fills all Well-wishers to the Interest of *Religion*, with just Fears, as to the Issue.

Nor was it any Wonder that these Pretences should take, especially with Persons of liberal Education and Parts, who only were capable of observing those Faults which gave Occasion for them: Since the Generality were prepar'd for, and inclin'd to such a *Defection* by a long Continuance under the external Dispensation of the Gospel, without any Experience of its Power, the prevalent Love of Lust, that makes Men impatient of any Thing that may have the least Tendency to restrain them from pursuing the Gratification thereof; to which we may add the *natural Enmity* of the Mind of Man against the *Mystery* of the Gospel.

There was another Thing, which at this Time had no small Influence, the Philosophical Writings of Mr. *Hobbs*, *Spinosa*, and some others of the same Kidney, got, one Way or other, a great Vogue amongst our young Gentry and Students, whereby many were poison'd with Principles destructive of all true *Religion* and *Morality*.

By those and the like Means, Things are now come to that Pass, that not a few have been bold to avow their Apostacy from the *Christian Religion*, not only in *Conversation*, but in *Print*. They disown the Name of *Christ*, call themselves *Deists*, and glory in that Name. They have published many *Writings* reflecting on the *Scriptures*, and justifying themselves in rejecting them.

And we have just Reason to suspect that, besides those, who do avow their Principles, who are perhaps as numerous in these Lands, as any where else, there are many, who yet are asham'd to speak it out, who bear them Good-will, and who want only a little more Time to harden themselves against the *Odium* that *this Way* goes under, and a fair Occasion of throwing off the Mask, which they yet think meet to retain. Of this we have many Indications.

Many have assum'd an unaccountable Boldness, in treating Things sacred and serious too freely in Writing and Conversation. They make bold to jest upon the *Scriptures*, and upon every Occasion to traverse them. When once Men have gone this Length, the Veneration due to that blessed Book is gone, and they are in a fair Way to reject it.

Others have made great Advances to *this Defection*, by disseminating and entertaining Reproaches against a standing Ministry. It is known what Contempt has been cast upon this Order of Men, whom GOD hath intrusted with the *Gospel Dispensation*, and who, by Office,
are

are oblig'd to maintain its Honour. If this *Order of Men* fall under that general Contempt, which some do their utmost to bring them to, *Religion* cannot long maintain its Station amongst us, when the principal Means of the LORD's Appointment are laid aside, or render'd useless, no other Means will avail.

And hereon further there follows a Neglect of Attendance on the Ministry of the *Word*, which the LORD has appointed for the *Edification of the Church*, and establishing People in the Faith of the Truth, he has reveal'd to us therein. When this once begins to be neglected, Men will soon turn *Sceptical* and unconcern'd about *Religion*.

And further, It is very observable, That many are strengthened in this Neglect, by Principles calculate for this Purpose, while the whole Efficacy of Preaching is made to depend, not on the *Blessing* of Christ, whose Institution it is, or the *Influences* of his Spirit, which he has promis'd for setting it Home on the Hearers for their *Conviction, Conversion* and *Edification*; but on the *Abilities* and *Address* of the *Preachers*. Its natural to conclude, That it's better to stay at Home and read some Book, than to go to Sermon, if the Preacher is not of very uncommon Abilities. Which is a Principle avow'd by many, and their Practice suits their Principles.

Besides, which is the true Spring of the former, I am afraid *Ignorance* of the Nature of *Reveal'd Religion*, the Design of its Institutions, and all its principal Concerns, is become more common than is usually observ'd, even amongst Men of liberal Education and the best Quality. And hence many of them entertain Notions inconsistent with their *own Religion*, at first out of *Ignorance*, and afterwards think themselves in Honour engag'd to defend them, albeit destructive to the *Religion* they profess.

Add to all this, That *Profanity* in Practice has, like a Deluge, overspread those Lands: And where this once takes Place, Love to Sin never fails to ingage Men to those Principles, which may countenance them in the Courses they love, and design to cleave to.

This seems plainly to be the State of Matters with us at present: And we see but little Appearance of any Redress. The Infection spreads, and many are daily carried off by it, both in *England* and *Scotland*. Tho' it must be own'd that *Scotland*, as yet, is less tainted with that Poison: But those of this Nation have no Reason to be secure, since many are infected, and mo are in a Forwardness to it, than is commonly thought.

Having

Having given this short, but I conceive, true Account of the *Rise and Growth* of *Deism*, it now remains that we consider, what these Principles are which they maintain. The *Deists*, albeit they are not perfectly *one* amongst themselves, yet do agree in Two Things. 1. They all reject *Reveal'd Religion*, and plainly maintain that all Pretences to *Revelation* are vain, Cheat and Imposture. 2. They all maintain that *natural Religion* is sufficient to answer all the great Ends of Religion, and the only Rule whereby all our Religious Practices are to be squar'd. The *first* of these Assertions only tells what their *Religion* is not, and expresses their Opposition to all *Revelation*, particularly to *Christianity*, which has been worthily defended and asserted against all their Objections by many of late; and I shall not much insist in adding to what they have written to such excellent Purpose. The *second* tells us what their *Religion* is, and it is this chiefly we design in the following Papers to debate with them. They have long been upon the *offensive* Part, which is more easy. We design now to put them on the *defensive*.

They who call themselves *Deists*, albeit they thus far agree; yet are not all of one Sort. I find them by one of their own Number class'd into Two Sorts, *Mortal* and *Immortal*. Oracles of Reason
Page 99.

The *Immortal* are they, who maintain a *Future State*. The *Mortal*, they who deny *one*. It is with the *first* we are principally concern'd; Yet I shall in the subsequent Chapter offer a few Things with Respect to the *Mortal Deists*. And in what I have to say of them, I shall be very short; because, I conceive, what has already been offer'd, in the Introduction, against this Sort of Men, might almost supersede any further Discourse about them.

CHAP. II.

Mortal Deists who, and what Judgment to be made of them, and their Sentiments.

THE *Mortal Deists*, who also are call'd *Nominal Deists*, denying a future State, are, in Effect, meer *Atheists*. This perhaps some
E may

may think a harsh Judgment; but yet it is such as the *Deists* themselves, who are on the other Side, will allow.

One who owns himself *Deist*, thus expresses his Mind, *We do believe, that there is an infinitely powerful, wise and good*

Letter to the *GOD, who superintends the Actions of Mankind, in Order to retribute to every one according to their Deserts: Neither are we to boggle at this Creed; For if we do not stick to it, we ruin the Foundations of all humane Happiness, and are, in Effect, no better than meer Atheists.*

A further Account of this Sort of Men we have given us by one, whom any may judge capable enough for it, who considers his Way of Writing, and the Account he gives of himself. I

Growth of *Deism* have observed some, says he, who pretend themselves
Page 5. *Deists, that they are Men of loose and sensual Lives; and I make no Wonder that they dislike the Christian*

Doctrine of Self-denial, and the severe Threatnings against wilful Sinners. You may be sure they will not alledge this Reason: But having read Spinoza and Hobbs, and being taught to laugh at the Story of Balaam's Ass, and Sampson's Locks, they proceed to ridicule the Reality of all Miracle and Revelation. I have convers'd with several of this Temper, but could never get any of them serious enough to debate the Reality of Revelation: But a witty Jest, and t'other Glass puts an End to all further Consideration. These are meer Scepticks and practical Atheists, rather than real Deists.

Now it's to no Purpose to debate with Men of this Temper. If they will listen to Arguments, many have said enough, if not to convince them, for I know it is not an easy Matter to convince some Men; yet to stop their Mouths; and therefore I shall not offer any Arguments: Only I shall lay down a few clear Principles, and from them draw an Inference or two, which will make it evident, what Judgment we are to make of this Sort of Men.

The Principles I take for incontrovertible are these which follow, 1. He deserves not the Name of a *Man*, who acts not *rationaly*, knowing what he does, and to what End. 2. No Action which contributes not, at least, in Appearance, to *Man's Happiness* is worthy of him. 3. The *Happiness* of a present Life, which is all that these Gentlemen allow, consists in the *Injoyment* of Things agreeable to our *Nature*; and Freedom from those which are noisom to it. 4. *Man's Nature* is such, that his *Felicity* depends not only on these Things, which at present he has, or wants; but likewise, on what is past, and what is future, a
Prospect

Prospect of the one, and Reflection on the other, according as they are more or less agreeable, exceedingly increasing his Pleasure or Pain. 5. The Hopes of obtaining hereafter *the Good* we at present want, and of being freed from *Evils* we suffer by, mightily enhances the Pleasure of what we possess, and always the Trouble that arises from incumbent Evils. 6. So strong is the Desire every one finds in himself of a Continuation in *Being*, as cannot choose but render the Thoughts of *Annihilation* very terrible and irksom. 7. The Practice of *Vertue*, as it is the most probable Mean of attaining *future Happiness*, if any such State be, so 'tis that which tends most to perfect and advance Man's Nature; and so must give the most solid and durable Pleasure, even here in this Life. 8. It is malicious to do what tends to the obstructing *another's Happiness*, when it cannot further *one's own*. Few Men will question any of those, and if any do, its not worth While to debate with him. Now from these we may see,

1. It would contribute much to those Gentlemens *present Felicity* to believe, (be it true or false) that there is a *future State of Happiness*, since the Hopes of immutable and endless Bless would be a notable *Antidote* against the Uneasiness of Mind, that arises not only from *incumbent Evils*, but also from those we fear, and the Inconstancy of our short liv'd Injoyments.

2. The Generality of Mankind, especially where *Christianity* obtains, being already possess'd of the Prospect of *future Happiness*, which supports them under present Evils, arms them against the troublesome Reflections on past Troubles, and Fears of the future: And moreover animates them in the Practice of these Actions whereby not only their own Good, but that of the Societies wherein they live, is signally promoted. All Attempts to rob them of this Hope are highly malicious, and import no less than a Conspiracy against the Happiness of Mankind, and the Good of the Society, wherein they live: And therefore we may say assuredly, That as those *Mortal Deists* are much incommoded by their own Opinion; so their Attempts for its Propagation, must be look'd on, as proceeding from no good Design to the rest of Mankind.

Here perhaps some of them may say, That this Opinion tends to liberate a great Part of Mankind, from the disquieting Fears of *future Misery*.

To this I answer, 1. I believe it true, that their Fears of *future Misery* are uneasy to them, are they have but little Hope of *future Felicity*. Their Way of Living allows them none. But these Fears proceed

ceed from Conscience of Guilt, and are the genuine Results of Actions, equally destructive to the Actors, and the Interest of the rest of Mankind. 2. These Fears have their Use, and serve to deter from such Evils as are ruining to the Persons, who commit them, and humane Society. 3. While this Opinion liberates a few of the worst of Men, from these Fears, which are a Part of the just Punishment of their Villainies; it emboldens them to run on in these Evils, which ruin themselves and others; and dispirits and discourages the only useful Part of Mankind, by filling them with dismal Thoughts of *Annihilation*. 4. Nor can all that the *Deists* are able to do, liberate themselves or Mankind from those Fears. The utmost that they can pretend, with any Shew of Reason, is, that we have not Ground to believe such a *State*. Will this make us sure that there is none? But of this we have said enough in the Introduction.

By what has been said it is evident, what Judgment we are to make of this Sort of *Deists*. Their Lives, Writings and Death shew them to be *meer Atheists*.

— *Vaninus*, when first he appear'd and wrote his *Amphitheatrum Providentiæ Divinæ*, set out for such an one that believ'd a Great geogra- GOD. But at Length spoke out plainly that he believ'd none, and was deservedly burnt for *Atheism* at phical Dictionary. *Tholouse*, April 9. 1619. He confess'd there were Twelve of them that parted in Company from *Naples* to teach their Doctrine in all the Provinces of *Europe*.

Uriel Accosta wrote for this Opinion, as himself tells us in his *Exemplar Vitæ Humanæ*, which is subjoin'd to *Limburg's* Conference with *Orobins* the Jew His last Action tells us, what Man he was. After he had made a vain Attempt to shoot his Brother, he discharg'd a Pistol in his own Breast. This fell out about the Twentieth or Thirtieth Year of the last Century. So they live, and so they die.

Were this our Design, or if we saw any Need of it, we might give such an Account of the Principles, Practices and tragical Exits of not a few of this Sort of Persons, as would be sufficient to deter the sober from following them. But what has been said is sufficient to discover the destructive Tendency of their *prime Opinion*. And further we shall not concern our selves with them, but go on to that which is mainly intended in this Discourse.

C H A P. III.

Wherein the Controversy betwixt us and the Immortal Deists is stated and clear'd.

THE Immortal Deists, who own a future State, are the only Persons with whom it is worth While to dispute this Point about the Sufficiency of natural Religion. Before we

offer any Arguments on this Head, it is necessary we state the Question clearly : And it is the more necessary that none of the *Deists* have had the Courage or Honesty to do it. And here in the Entry we shall lay down some Things, which we think are not to be controverted on this Occasion. And we shall, after these Concessions are made, enquire what still remains in Debate.

1. Introduction.

1. We look on it as certain, That all the World, in all Ages, hath been possess'd of some Notion of a GOD, of some Power above them, on whom, in more or less, they did depend ; and to whom, on this Account, some Respect is due. This *Heathens* have observed.

2. Concessions laid down.

Cicero, amongst others, hath long since told us, That there is no Nation so barbarous that owns not some GOD, that has not some Anticipations or Impressions from Nature of a God. Nor is this any more, than what we are told, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20, &c. That the *Gentiles* have some Notions of Truth concerning GOD, which they hold in Unrighteousness; that GOD, partly by erecting a Tribunal in their own Breasts, which they cannot decline, tho' they never so much would, and partly by presenting to their Eyes those visible Works that bear a lively Impress of His invisible Power and God-head, hath, as it were, forc'd upon them the Knowledge of some Part of that, which the Apostle calls *νοῦς τοῦ θεοῦ*, or that which may be known of GOD. Whence they all in some Measure knew GOD, tho' they glorified him not as GOD.

Cicero de Natura Deorum. Lib. 1.

The Stories some have told us of Nations that have no Notion of a GOD, upon Search are found false. And for some lewd Persons, who have pretended to a settled Perswasion, they are not to be credited.

We

We have sufficient Reason to look on them as Liars, or at least, not to admit them as Witnesses in this Case.

I enquire not whether they were acquainted with the proper and true Grounds of the Obligation of those Laws they own'd obligatory.

Lock's Essay of Humane Understanding, Book 1. Ch. 4. § 11.

Beconfall of Nat. Relig. Ch. 6. § 1, 2.

Theologumen. Lib. 1. Cap. 5. Par. 2.

II. I do think that the Knowledge of *some of the more obvious* Laws of Nature, and their Obligation, hath universally obtain'd. The *Gentiles*, all of them, do by Nature *those Things*, that is, the material Part of those Duties, which the Law of Nature enjoins; which shews the Work of the Law, or some Part of it, at least, to be written in their Hearts, since they do Somethings it enjoins.

I do not think that this *Writing of the Law* imports innate Ideas, or innate actual Knowledge, which Mr. Lock hath been at so much Pains to disprove, with what Success I enquire not now. Some do

think, that while he grants the Self-evidence of a natural Propensity of our Thoughts, toward some Notions, which others call innate, he grants all that the more Judicious intend by that Expression.

Others think that Mr. Lock's Arguments conclude only the Improbability of innate Ideas, and that they are to be rejected, rather for Want of Evidence for them, than for the Strength of what is said against them: But whatever there

is as to this, neither the Apostle's Scope, nor Words oblige us to maintain them. What is intended may be reduc'd to two Assertions, viz. That Men are born with such Faculties, which cannot, after they are capable of exercising them, but admit the Obligation and binding Force of some, at least, of the *Laws of Nature*, when they are fairly offered to their Thoughts: And that Man is so fitted, that he cannot miss Occasions of thinking of, or coming to the Knowledge of those *Laws of Nature*.

Homines nasci Cognitione aliqua Dei instructos, haud dicimus: Nullam omnino habent, sed Vi cognoscendi dicimus; neque ita naturaliter cognoscunt atque sentiunt, insitam Potentiam Deum cognoscendi, ad Cultum ejus aliquo Modo præstandum, Stimulantem, sponte se in adultis Rationis compotibus, non minus certo & necessario quam ipsum ratiocinari, exerturam, unumquemque retinere, Ratio nulla est cur opinemur, cum Sentiamus, says the Learned Dr. Owen.

III. It is unquestionable, and has been sufficiently attested by the Nations, and even by some of the worst of them, that Man has a Conscience,

science, that sometimes drags the greatest and most obstinate Offenders to its Tribunal, in their own Breasts, accuses them, condemns them, and in some Sort executes the Sentence against them, for their counter-acting known Duty, how little so ever they know. A Heathen Poet could say,

— *Prima est hæc Ultio, quod se
Judice, Nemo nocens absolvitur, improba quamvis
Gratia fallacis Prætoris vicerit Urnam.*

IV. We own that those *Laws of Nature*, which are of absolute Necessity to the Support of Government, and Order in the World, and the Maintenance of humane Society, are, in a good Measure, knowable by the *Light of Nature*, and have been generally known.

V. We willingly admit that, what by *Tradition*, what by the *Improvement of Nature's Light*, many of the wiser *Heathens* have come to know, and express many Things excellently, as to the *Nature of God*, *Man's Duty*, *the Corruption of Nature*, *a future State*, &c. and some of them have liv'd nearer up to the Knowledge they had than others: For which they are highly to be commended, and I don't grudge them their due Praise.

VI. I look on it as certain, That the *Light of Nature*, had it been duly improv'd, might have carry'd them in these Things, and others of the like Nature, further than ever any went.

But after all these Things are granted, the Question concerning the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, remains untouched.

For clearing this, it is further to be observed, That, when we speak of the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, or those Notices of God, and the Way of Worshipping him, which are attainable by the *meer Light of Nature*, without *Revelation*, we consider it as a *Mean* in Order to some *End*. For by *Sufficiency* is mean'd, that *Aptitude* of a *Mean* for compassing some *End*, that infers a necessary Connection betwixt the *due Use*, that is, such an Use of the *Mean*, as the Person to whom it is said to be *sufficient*, is capable to make of it, and the *Attainment of the End*.

Now *natural Religion* under this Consideration may be asserted *sufficient* or not, according as it's look'd at with Respect to *one End*, or *another*: For it is useful to several Purposes, and has a Respect to *several Ends*.

1. It may be considered with Respect to *humane Society*, upon which *Religion* has a considerable Influence. *There could never possibly be any Government settled amongst Atheists, or those who pay no Respect to a Deity, Remove GOD once out of*

S. Ch. Wolfeley
Unreas. of Atheism,
Pag. 152. &c.

Heaven,

Heaven, and there will never be any Gods upon Earth. If Man's Nature had not Something of Subjection in it to a supreme Being above him, and inherent Principles obliging him how to behave himself toward God, and toward the Rest of the World, Government could have never been introduc'd, nor thought of. Nor can there be the least mutual Security between Governours and Governed, where no God is admitted. For it is an Acknowledging of GOD, in his supreme Judgment over the World, that is the Ground of an Oath; and upon which the Validity of all humane Engagements do depend, says an excellent Person. And the fam'd Cicero expresses himself very fully to the same Purpose,

X De Natura Deorum, speaking of Religion and Piety, he says, --- Quibus Lib. 1. mihi. Pag. 5. sublati, Perturbatio Vitæ sequitur, & magna Confusio, atque haud scio, an Pietate adversus Deos sublata, Fides etiam, & Societas humani Generis, & una excellentissima Virtus, Justitia tollatur. If the Question concern'd this End, we might own natural Religion some Way sufficient to be a Foundation for humane Society, and some Order and Government in the World: For it is in Fact evident, that where Revelation has been wanting, there have been several well form'd Governments. Tho' still it must be said,

That they were oblig'd to Tradition for many Things that were of Use, and to have recourse to pretended Revelation, where the real was wanting. Which shews Revelation necessary, if not to the Being, yet to the Well-being of humane Society.

II. Natural Religion may be considered in its Subserviency to God's Moral Government of the World; and with Respect to this, it has several considerable Uses, that I cannot enter upon the Detail of. It is the Measure of God's judicial Proceedings, with Respect to those of Mankind, who want Revelation; and as to this, there is one Thing that's usually observed, That it's sufficient to justify God in punishing Sinners, That God sometimes, even here in Time, punishes Offenders, and, by the Forebodings of their Consciences, gives them dreadful Presages of a Progress in his Severity, against them, after this Life, cannot well be deny'd. Now certainly there must be some Measure, whereby God proceeds in this Matter. Where there is no Law there is no Transgression. Punishments cannot be inflicted, but for the Transgression, and according to the Tenor of a Law. And this Law, if it is holy, just and good, in its Precepts, and equal in its Sanction, is not only the Measure whereby the Governour proceeds in punishing Offenders; but that which justifies

justifies him in the Punishment of them. It is needless to speak of the *Grant of Rewards* in this Case, because with Respect to them, not only *Justice*, but *Grace* and *Bounty* have Place, which are not astricted to any such nice Measures in the Dispensation of Favours, as *Justice* is in Execution of Punishments. Now if *natural Religion* is considered with Respect to *this End*, we say it is *sufficient* to justify God, and tully clear him from any Imputation of Injustice or Cruelty; whatever Punishments he may, either in Time or after Time, inflict upon Mankind, who want *Revelation*. There are none of them come to Age who 1. have not fallen short of knowing many Duties, which they might have known. 2. Who have not omitted many Duties, which they knew themselves obliged to. And 3. Who have not done what they knew they ought not to have done and might have forborn. If these Three are made out, as no Doubt they may be against all Men, I don't see what Reason any will have to implead God either of *Hardship* or *Injustice*.

There are, I know, who think it very hard, that those *natural Notices* of God and Religion, should be *sufficient* to justify God in adjudging those, who counteract them, to *future* and *eternal Punishments*, while yet such an Attendance to, and Compliance with them as Men are capable of, in their present Circumstances, is *not sufficient* to intitle us to *eternal Rewards*.

But if, in this Matter, any *Injustice* is charg'd upon God, who shall manage the Plea? Shall they who transgress and contraveen those Notices do it? But what *Injustice* meet they with, if they are condemn'd for not knowing what they might have known? Not doing what they were oblig'd to do, and were able to do? And for doing what they might and should have forborn? If all these may be laid to their Charge, tho' there were no more, what have they to say for themselves or against God? They sure have no Reason to complain. If any have Reason to complain, it must be they who have walked up to the *natural Notices* of God. But where is there any such? We may spare our Vindication till such an one be found. Nor is it easy to prove that Man's Obedience, tho' perfect, must necessarily intitle to *eternal Felicity*. And he who shall undertake to implead God of Injustice upon the Account of such a Sentence, as that we now speak of, will not find it easy to make good his Charge.

Were the Difficulty thus moulded, that it's hard to pretend that those *natural Notices* of God are *sufficient* to justify God in condemning the

Transgressors of them to future Punishments, while punctual Compliance with them is not sufficient to save those, who yield this Obedience, from those Punishments, which the Contraveeners are liable to for their Transgression. Tho' it were thus moulded, it would be a hard Task to make good such a Charge. But I am not concern'd in it: Nor are any, who judge the Persons, who have gone furthest in this Compliance, liable upon other Accounts, because they still own their Compliance so far available to them, as to save them from those Degrees of Wrath, which deeper Guilt would have inferr'd.

3. Other Ends there are, with Respect to which natural Religion may be considered, which I shall pass without naming, and shall only make Mention of that which we are concern'd in, and is aim'd at in the present Controversie, and that is, *The future Happiness of Man in the Enjoyment of God*. This certainly is the supreme and ultimate End of Religion with Respect to Man himself. For that the Glory of God is the chief End absolutely, and must, in all Respects, have the Preference, I place beyond Debate.

Now it is as to this End, that the Question about the Sufficiency of natural Religion is principally mov'd. And the Question, in short, amounts to this, *Whether the Notices of God and Religion, which all Men by the Light of Nature have, or at least by the meer Improvement of their natural Abilities without Revelation, may have, are sufficient to direct them in the Way to eternal Blessedness, satisfy them that such a State is attainable, and point out the Way how it is to be attain'd; and whether by that practical Compliance with those Notices, which Man in his present State is capable of, he may certainly attain to Acceptance with God, please him, and obtain this eternal Happiness in the Enjoyment of him?* The Deists are for the Affirmative: As we shall afterwards make appear, when we consider their Opinions more particularly.

But before we proceed to offer Arguments, it will be needful to branch this Question into several Particulars that are included in it, that we may the better conceive of, and take up the Import of it, and how much is included and wrapt up in this Assertion. The Question, which we have propos'd in general, may be turn'd into those five subordinate Queries.

I. *Whether by the meer Light of Nature we can discover an eternal State of Happiness, and know that this is attainable?* Unless this is done, nothing in Matters of Religion is done. It is impossible that Nature's Light can give any Directions as to the Means of attaining future Happiness, if it cannot satisfy us, that there is such a State.

II. *Whether*

II. *Whether Men left to the Conduct of the meer Light of Nature, can certainly discover and find out the Way of attaining it?* that is, Whether by the *Light of Nature* we can know and find out all that is required of us, in Way of Duty, in Order to our *eternal Felicity*? If the *Affirmative* is chosen, it must be made appear by *Nature's Light*, what Duties are absolutely necessary to this Purpose, that those which are prescribed are indeed Duties, that they are all that are necessary in Order to the Attainment of *the End*, if they are comply'd withall. Albeit we should have it never so clearly made out that there is a *future State of Happiness*, yet if we are left at an utter Loss as to *the Means* of attaining it, we are no better for the Discovery.

III. *Whether Nature's Light gives such a full and certain Discovery of both these as the Case seems to require?* Considering what a Case Man at present is in, to hope for an *Eternity of Happiness*, is to look very high. And any Man, who in his present Circumstances, shall entertain such an Expectation, on meer Surmises, Suspicions and May-beis, may be reproached by the World, and his own Heart as a Fool. To keep a Man up in the steady Impression and Expectation of so great Things, *Conjectures, Suppositions, Probabilities* and *confus'd general Hints* are not sufficient. Again there are huge Difficulties to be surmounted in the Way to this *Blessedness*, which are obvious and certain. Sensible Losses are sometimes to be sustain'd, sensible Pains to be undergone, and sensible Dangers to be look'd in the Face. Now the Question is, *Whether is there such a clear and certain Knowledge of these attainable as the Importance of the Case, the Strefs that is to be laid on them, and the Dangers that are to be encountred for them, requires?* Certain it is, it will not be such Notices as most please themselves with, that will be able to answer *this End*.

IV. *Whether the Evidence of the Attainableness of a future State of Happiness, and of the Way to it, is such as suits the Capacities of all concern'd?* Every Man has a Concernment in this Matter. The *Deists* enquire after a Religion that is able to *save all*, whereof every Man, if he but please, may have the *eternal Advantage*. Now then the Question is, Whether the Case is so stated, as that every Man, who is in earnest, if he has but the Use of Reason, however shallow his Capacity is, how great soever his inevitable Intanglements and Hinderances from close Application are, may attain to this Certainty, about this End and the Way to it? For it must be allow'd that there is a vast Difference among Men as to Capacity. Men are no more of one Measure in Point of *intellectual Abilities*, than in *Stature*. That may be out of the Reach of one, which another may easily attain to. Now, may as much be certainly

known by the meanest Capacity as is necessary for him to know? Again, all Men have not alike Leisure. That may be impossible to me, if I am a poor Man, oblig'd to work hard to earn my own and Family's Bread, which would not be so if I had Leisure and Opportunity to follow my Studies. Now, if these Discoveries, both as to their Truth, Certainty and Suitableness are not such as the meanest, notwithstanding of any inevitable Hinderances he may be under, may reach, they will not answer the End.

V. *Whether, supposing all the former, every Man, however surrounded with Temptations, and enveigled with corrupt Inclinations, or other Hinderances, which he cannot evade, is yet able, without any Supply of supernatural Strength, to comply so far with all those Duties, as is absolutely needful in Order to obtain this eternal Happiness?* Whatever our Knowledge is, we are not the better for it, unless we are able to yield a practical Compliance.

The *Deists* have the *Affirmative* of all these Questions to make good. How they acquit themselves in this, we shall see afterwards. The Task, as any one may see, is sufficiently difficult. And I do not know, that any one of them who has yet wrote hath given any Evidence that they understood the State of the Question in its full Extent. They huddle it up in the Dark, that the Weakness of their Proofs may not appear. And perhaps they are not willing to apply their Thoughts so closely to the Subject, as is requisite, in Order to take up the true State of the Controversy.

The more remiss and careless they have been this Way, we had so much the more to do to state the *Question* truly betwixt us and them. And having done this, we shall next proceed to make good our Part of it.

A *Negative* is not easily proven, which puts us at some Loss. It has been deny'd that it can in some Cases be proven. But we hope, in this Case, we are able to offer such Reasons as will justify us in holding the *Negative* in this Debate. And we shall see next whether they are able to demonstrate the *Affirmative*, and offer as good Reasons for it, as we shall give against it. And it is but Reason that they should offer better in a Matter of so great Concern.

C H A P. IV.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion from the Insufficiency of its Discoveries of a Deity.

TH O it belongs to the Asserters of the *Sufficiency* of natural Religion, to justify by Argument their Assertion, and we who are upon the *Negative*, might supersede any further Debate, until such Time, as we see how they can acquit themselves here; yet Truth not Triumph, being the Design of our engaging in the Contest, that none may think we are without Reason in our Denial, and that we put them upon the Proof, only to difficult them, we shall now by some Arguments endeavour to evince the *Insufficiency* of natural Religion.

1. Proof belongs to the Deists the Asserters: But this Advantage waved.

The first Argument I shall improve to this Purpose is deduc'd from the *Insufficiency* of those Discoveries; which the *Light of Nature* is able to make of GOD. Nothing is more plain than this, that Religion is founded upon the *Knowledge* of the Deity; and that our Regard for him will be answerable to the Knowledge we have of him. That Religion there ore which is defective here, is lame with a Witness: And if *Nature's Light* cannot afford such Notices of the Deity, as are sufficient or necessary to beget and maintain Religion amongst Men, then, it can never with any rational Man be allowed sufficient to direct Men in Religion.

2. The first Argument proposed.

Now, for clearing this Argument, several Things are to be discours'd. And first of all, it is requisite, that we state such a Notion of Religion in general, as may be allow'd, to pass with all, who are, or can reasonably be suppos'd, competent Judges in such Matters. Religion then, in general may be justly said to import that *Veneration, Respect or Regard, which is due from the rational Creature, in his whole Course or Life, to the supreme supereminently excellent Being, his Creator, Preserver, LORD or Governour and Benefactor.*

3. The Argument illustrate, Religion what it is.

The

The *Actions* of the rational Creature, which may come under the Notion of *Religion*, are of Two Sorts : Some of them, do directly, properly and immediately import a Regard or Respect to GOD as their *End* : Which they are immediately and properly design'd to express : Such Acts are call'd *Acts of Worship*. and *Religion* is more eminently thought to consist in these, and that not without Reason. Yea, by some it is wholly, and against all Reason, confin'd to them, and circumscribed within those Bounds. Again, there are other Actions, which tho' they have other more proper, direct and immediate *Ends*, on Account whereof they undergo various Denominations ; yet they also are, or may be, and certainly should be subordinate to that : Which, tho' it is not the proper, most immediate, and distinguishing *End* of these Actions, yet is the common and *ultimate End*, at which all a Man's Actions should be levelled. Now all the Actions of a rational Creature, which are of this last Sort, as referred to a *Deity*, and importing somewhat of *Religion*, may be term'd Acts of *Moral Obedience*. In so far they are religious, and come within the Compass of our Consideration, as they express any Respect to GOD : And they express and import Regard to GOD, in as far as they quadrate with the *Moral Law*, which is the Instrument of GOD's *Moral Government* of the World ; and therefore if they are right and agreeable to *this Rule*, they may be term'd Acts of *Moral Obedience*, to distinguish them from these Acts, which are *solely* and more *strictly* religious, and are call'd *Acts of Worship*.

But to speak somewhat more particularly of this Regard that is due to GOD, it is as evident as any Thing can, that it must be,

1. In its *formal Nature* different from that Respect, which we may allowably pay to any Creature, that is, it must be given on Accounts no Way common to him with any of the Creatures ; but on Account of those distinguishing Excellencies, which are his incommunicable Glory. None can reasonably deny this, since it must be allow'd by all, that *Religious Respect* due to GOD, and *Civil Respect* due to Creatures are different, and must be principally differenced by the Grounds, whereon the Respect to the one or other is paid. Now the Grounds

4. *Religion concerns it self in all our Acts*

of Worship and

5. *That Regard due to the Deity in the one, and in the other must be*

peculiar, given on Accounts not common to him with any other.

Grounds whereon this *Homage* is due unto the *Deity*, are, the *supereminence*, nay *infinite* Excellency of his Nature and Perfections, and his indisputably *supreme*, *absolute* and *independent* Sovereignty over all his Creatures, which stands eternally firm and unshaken, as being supported by that *Supereminency of his Excellency*, his *Creation*, *Preservation*, and *Benefits*. Now none of these Grounds are, in any Degree, communicable to the Creature: And so to talk of a *Religious Worship* due to the Creature, is to speak Nonsense with a Witness.

II. This Veneration we give to GOD must be *intensively*, or as to Degree, not only superior to that which we give to any Creature, but even *supreme*. It is not enough, *In Degree superior* that we love GOD on Account's peculiar to him; *to that we pay to any* but we must love him with a Love superior to *other, and* that which we give any Creature, and *answerable* to those Accounts, whereon we do love him: And the like may be said as to other Instances. There is no Need of insisting in the Proof of this. Would our King be pleas'd, if we paid him no more Respect, than we do his Servant? Is the Distance betwixt God and the highest Creature less considerable, than that which is betwixt a King and his meanest Subject? Nay, is it not infinitely more? How can it then reasonably be expected that the same Degree of Respect we pay to the Creatures, will find Acceptance, or answer the Duty we owe to the glorious and ever blessed LORD GOD?

III. This Veneration must be *extensively* superior to that pay'd to any of the Creatures. Our *Re-* *universal in its Ex-*
gard to the *Deity*, must not be confin'd to one *tent as reaching to e-*
Sort of our Actions; those, for Instance, which *very Moral Action.*
are *Religious in a strict Sense*, or more plainly,
Acts of Worship. But it must run through every Action of our Life, inward and outward. Every Action is a Dependent of God's, and owes him Homage. It is otherwise with Men; for to one Sort of Men, we may owe Respect, in one Sort of our Actions, and owe them none in another. A Child, in filial Duties, owes his Father *Respect*; as a Subject, he owes his Governour *Reverence*; and so of other Instances of alike Nature: But to no one Creature is he, in *all Respects*, subject, or oblig'd by every Action to express any Regard: And the Reason is plain, he is subject to none of them in *all Respects*, wherein he is capable of Acting. But, with Respect to God, the Matter is quite otherwise: Whatever he has, is from God, and to him he is in *all respects* subject;

subject; on him he every Way depends. The Power your Father has over you, he derives from GOD, & it is GOD that binds the Duties you are to pay your Father on you; and therefore GOD is to be own'd as *Supreme*, even in every Act of Duty, you perform to your Father, your King, your Neighbour or your selves: For you are in all Respects *His*, while ye are subordinate on various Accounts to others; yet still GOD is in every Regard *Supreme* and *Sovereign Lord* and *Disposer* of you and your Actions, and therefore a Regard you owe him, in every Thing you think, speak or do. I think this plain enough.

I hope this Account of the *Nature of Religion* in general, will not be found liable to any considerable Exceptions, it being no other, than such as the first View of the Nature of the Thing offers to any that seriously considers it. And from this Account it is evident, *That Religion is founded on the Knowledge of a Deity*. A *blind Devotion* that is begot and maintain'd either by profound Ignorance of GOD, or confus'd Notions of him, answers neither Man's Nature, which is rational, and requires that he proceed in all his Actions, especially those of most Moment, *rationally*, that is, with Knowledge and Willingness; nor will it obtain Acceptance, as that which answers his Duty, whereby he is oblig'd to serve GOD with the best and in the highest Way his Faculties admit him. The contrary Supposition of *Papists* is a scandalous Reproach to the *Nature*, both of GOD and *Man*; and an Engine suited only unto the selfish Design of the villainous Priests, who, that they may have the Conduct of Mens Souls, and so the Management of their Estates, have endeavour'd to hood-wink Man, and make him brutish, where he should be most rational; and that they may have *the best*, they make him present GOD with *the Blind* and *the Lame*, which his *Soul* abhors.

This being, in general, clear, *That the Knowledge of GOD is the Foundation of all acceptable Religion*, it is now proper to enquire *what Discoveries* of God are requisite to bring Man to such a *Religion*, as has been above describ'd, and to keep him up in the Practice of it. Now if we look seriously into this Matter, I think we may lay down the following Positions, as clear beyond rational Contradiction.

1. That a *particular Knowledge of GOD* is requisite to *this Purpose*, to beget and maintain this Reverence for the *Deity*, which is his undoubted due. It is not enough that we have some general Notions, however extensive. To conceive of GOD in the general, that he is the *best* and *greatest of Beings*, *optimus maximus*, is not enough. The Reason is obvious: We must have in every Sort of Actions, nay, in each particular Action,

Action, that Knowledge, which may influence and guide us to that Respect, which is due to him, in that Sort of Actions, or that particular one; but this general Notion having no more Respect to one than another, will not do. It directs us no more in one than another, unless the Particulars that are comprehended under that general be explain'd to, and understood by the Actor.

II. That *Knowledge, which will answer the End, must be large and comprehensive.* This Religion is not to be confin'd to one particular Sort of Actions, but to run through all, and therefore there must be a Knowledge, not meerly of one or two Perfections of the divine Nature, but of all: Not simply, as if GOD were to be comprehended, but of all those Perfections and Prerogatives of GOD, which require our Regard in our particular Actions, in so far as they are the Ground of our Veneration. As for Instance, To engage me to *Trust* GOD, I must know his *Power*, his *Care* and *Knowledge*: To engage me to *Pray* to him, I must be perswaded of his *Knowledge*, of his *Willingness* and *Power* to assist me in the Suit I put up: To engage me to *love* him, I must know the *Amiability* of his Perfections; to engage me to pay him *Obedience*, I must know his *Authority*, the *Laws* he has stamp'd it on, and that he has fixed a *Law* to these particular Actions, either more *general* or more *special*. Whence it being evident, That different Actions require different Views of GOD in Order to their Regulation; and all a Man's Actions being under Rule, there must be a large and comprehensive Knowledge of GOD to guide him in his whole Course.

III. It being no less than an *universal Religion* that is to be sought after, the Discoveries of GOD wherein it must be founded, *must be plain to the Capacities of all Mankind*; and that both as to the *Truth* of their Discoveries and their *Use*. It is certain that all Men are no more of the same Measure of Understanding, than they are in Stature. However important the Discovery is, if it is above my Reach, it is all one to me as if it were not discovered at all. To tell me of such a Thing, but it's in the Clouds, is to amuse and not to instruct me. There may indeed, supposing an *universal Religion* be somewhat of Difference as to *Knowledge* allowed, as to some of the Concernments of *this Religion*, to Persons of more Capacity and Industry, and who have more Time; but if it is calculate for the Good of *all Mankind*, the Discoveries must be such, as all who are concern'd may reach, as to all its *Essentials*; for the meanest have as much Concernment in them as the greatest.

IV. It is most evident, That *these Discoveries* must be *certain*, or come recommended by such Evidence as may be *convincing and satisfying to every Mind*. Conjectural Discoveries, or Surmises of these Things built upon airy and subtile Speculations, are not firm enough to establish such a Perswasion of Truth in the Soul, as may be able to influence to this *universal Regard*, over the Belly of the strongest inward Byas and outward Rubs.

V. *The Evidence of these Things must be abiding*; such as may be able to keep up the Soul in a constant Adherence to Duty. It is not one Day that Man is to obey, but always; and therefore these Discoveries must lie so open to the Mind at all Times, as that the Soul may by them be constantly kept up in it's Adherence to Duty. If from any external or internal Cause, there may arise such Obstructions as may for one Day keep Man from those Discoveries, or the Advantage of them; he may ruin, nay, must ruin himself by failing in his Duty; or at least, if he is not ruin'd, he is laid open to it.

VI. Upon the Whole it appears, That to found *natural Religion*, or to introduce and maintain among Men that Regard which is due to the Deity, there is requisite such a *large, comprehensive, certain, plain, and abiding Discovery*, as may have *sufficient Force to influence to a Compliance with his Duty in all Instances*.

Thus far Matters seem to be carried on with sufficient Evidence. We are now come to that which seems to be the *principal Hinge*, whereon the whole Controversy, about the *Sufficiency of natural Religion* turns; in so far at least, as it is to be determin'd by this Argument. Now this is, *Whether Nature's Light can indeed afford such Discoveries of GOD, as are evinc'd necessary for the Support of Religion?* If it cannot, then it is found *Insufficient*; if it can, then *natural Religion* is thus far acquit from the Charge laid against it. Now to attempt the Decision of this Question successfully, it is necessary that we state it right. It is not then the Question, *Whether in Nature there is sufficient objective Light*, as the Schools barbarously speak, that is, *Whether in the Works of Creation and Providence*, which lie open to our View, or are the Object of our Contemplation, there are such Prints of GOD, which if they were all fully understood by us, are *sufficient to this Purpose?* For the Question is not concerning the Works of GOD without us, but concerning us. The plain Question is this, *Whether Man can from those Works of GOD alone, without Help of Revelation, obtain such a Knowledge of God, as is sufficient to the Purpose mentioned?*

Now

Now the Question being concerning our *Power*, or rather the *Extent* of our *Power*, I know but four Ways that can be thought upon to come to a Point about it : Either,

1. By *Divine Revelation* we may be inform'd what *Nature's Light* unassisted can do. We would willingly put the Matter on this Issue : Our Adversaries will not ; so we shall leave it. Or,

2. Some apprehend that the Way to decide this, is, to take our Measures from the *Nature of GOD* ; and to enquire, When GOD was to make or did frame Man, with what *Powers* it was proper for him to endue him ? or, with what *Extent of Power*, considering the infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Power of the Creator. This Way the *Deists* would go. But 1. It seems a little presumptuous for us to prescribe, or measure what was fit for GOD to do, by what appears to us fit to have been done. For when we have soar'd as high as we can, we must fall down again ; for GOD's Counsels are too deep for us, and if we should think this or that fit for GOD, yet he having a more full View of Things, may think quite the contrary ; and thus all that we can come to here in this Way, is but a weak and presumptuous Conjecture. 2. If in Fact, what we think fit, or conjecture fit for GOD to have done, it be evident that GOD has not done, that he has given no such *Power* or *Extent of it*, as we judge necessary, our Judgment is not only weakly founded, but plainly false ; yea, and impious to boot ; for if GOD has done otherwise, it is certain the Way we prescrib'd was not best, nor can we hold by our own Apprehension, whatever *Shews* it is built on, without an implicate Charge of Folly against God. 3. Whatever we may pretend the Wisdom of GOD requires to be done for, or given to Man, if by no divine Act, there is any Evidence that he has so done, tho' there be no Proof of his having done the contrary, yet it weakens the Evidence of all we can say, if the Thing is such in its Nature, as would be known by Experience, if existent ; because, in that Case, the whole Stress of our Argument leans upon a Supposition that we are capable of judging of the Wisdom of GOD, while it is certain, we have not all those Circumstances under our View which may make it really fit to act this Way, rather than that, or that Way rather than this, which on the other Hand he certainly has. This Way then we cannot decide the Case.

3. We may immediately perhaps judge of the *Extent of Man's Ability* in this Sort, by a direct Enquiry into the *Nature of the Powers*. But this Way is as uncertain as the former : For there is no Agreement a-

mongst the most Judicious about the *Nature of those Powers*; without endless Controversies. And all that are really judicious own such Darkness in this Matter, that will not allow them to pretend themselves capable to decide the Question this Way. It is little we know of the *Nature* or *Powers* or *Actings* of Spirits: Nor do I believe that ever any Person that understands will pretend to decide the Controversie this Way. Wherefore,

4. We must upon the Whole give over the Business, or enquire into the Extent of our Abilitie by *Experience*; and judge what Man can do by what he has done. If not one has made sufficient Discoveries of GOD, it is rash to say that any one can by the *meer Light of Nature* make them: More especially it will appear so, if we consider, That all Mankind must be pretended equally capable of these Discoveries, which concern their own Practice. It is strange to pretend that all are capable of doing that which none has done. Further, these Discoveries are not of that Sort that may be sufficient to answer their End, if one in one Age shall make some Steps toward them, and another afterwards improve them: But it is necessary that every one, in every Age and at every Period of his Life, have exact Acquaintance with them, in so far as is needful to regulate his Practice in that Period of his Life. When I am in one Station, I must either fail in the Respect due to GOD, and so lay my self open to *Justice*, or I must know as much of GOD, as is requisite to influence a due Regard in that Station, or that Part of my Life that now runs; and therefore an universal Defect as to those Discoveries, must inevitably overthrow the *pretended Ability* of Man to make those Discoveries, and consequently the *Sufficiency of Nature's Light* to beget or maintain Religion, which cannot be supported without them.

Now for clearing this Matter, it is to be considered, That what we are upon is a *Negative*, and it belongs to those who affirm *Man able to make such Discoveries of GOD*, to show by whom, and where these Discoveries have been made, or to produce those *Notices of GOD* that are built on the *meer Light of Nature*, that are *sufficient* to this Purpose. Now none of them dare pretend this has been done, or, at least, shew who has done it, or make the Attempt themselves; and therefore we might take it as confest, that it is not to be done.

But if it is still pretended, That this has been done, tho' without telling us by whom, or pointing to these Discoveries where we may find them.

I answer, How shall we know this? May we know it by the Effects of it, in the Lives of those, who either have had no other Light, save that of *Nature*, as it was with the *Philosophers* of old before Christ, or who own none other save that of *Nature*, as the *Deists* and others who rejected *Christianity*? Truly if we judge by this Rule, we are sure the *Negative* will be much confirm'd; for it is plain that those Notions of a GOD, which were intertain'd by the *Philosophers* of old, influenc'd none of them to glorify him as GOD. The vulgar *Heathens* were void of any Respect to the True GOD; nay, by the Whole of their Practice bewrayed the profoundest Ignorance, and most contemptuous Disregard of him. The *Philosophers*, not one of them excepted, whatever Notions they had of a Deity, and whatever Length some of them went in *Morality*, upon other *Inducements*, yet shew'd nothing like to that peculiar, high and extensive Respect to the One true GOD, which we now enquire after. We may bid a Defiance to the *Deists*, to shew us any Thing like it in the Practice even of a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, a *Seneca*, or any others of them. Their Vertue was plainly built upon another Bottom. It has been judiciously observ'd by one of late, That there was little Notice taken of GOD in their *Ethicks*; and I may add, as little Regard in their Practice. Nor are the Lives of our *Deists*, or others since, any better Proof of the Sufficiency of the natural Notices of GOD, to beget and support a due Veneration for him.

If the *Deists* decline this Trial of the Sufficiency of those Discoveries of a GOD, by their Influence upon Practice, then we must look at them in themselves. And here we must have Recourse, either to those who had no Acquaintance with the Scripture Revelation; or to those who have given us Accounts of GOD amongst our selves; who tho' they own not the Scriptures to be from GOD, yet have had Access to them, for the Improvement of their own Notions about GOD. The last Sort might be cast, as incompetent Witnesses in this Case, upon very relevant Grounds. But we shall give our Enemies all that they can desire, even as to the Advantage they may have this Way, that they may see our Cause is not wanting in Evidence and Certainty.

We begin then with those who have been left to the meer Light of *Nature*, to spell out the Letters of GOD's Name, from the Works of Creation and Providence, without any Acquaintance with the more plain Scripture Account of GOD. Now what we have to say as to them, we shall comprize in a few Observations.

I. As

I. As for the Attainments of the *vulgar Heathens*, there is no Place for judging of them otherwise than by their *Practice*. They have consign'd nothing to Writing, and so we have no other Way to guess at their Opinions in Matters of *Religion*, but either by their *Practice*, or by ascribing to them the Principles of those, who in their respective Countries, had the Disposal of these Matters. Which ever Way we consider the Matter, it must be own'd that the *vulgar Heathens* were stupidly ignorant as to the Truths of *Religion*. If we make their *Practice* the Measure of judging, which in this Case is necessary, none can hesitate about it. If we make the *Principles* and *Knowledge* of their Leaders the Standard, whereby we are to judge of their Attainments, and make a suitable Abatement, because Scholars must always be suppos'd to know less than their Masters, I am sure the Matter will not be much mended, as the ensuing Remarks will in Part clear.

II. As to the *Philosophers*, if I had Time and Opportunity to present in a *Body* or *System*, all that has been said, not by one of them, but by all the best of them put together, it would put any one that reads, to wonder, That they, " *who were such*

S. Char. Wolfeley's
Reasonableness of
Scripture Belief.

Cicero, Lib. I. P. 4.
*Qui vero Deos esse
dixerunt, tanta sunt
in Varietate ac Dis-
sentione constituti, ut
eorum molestum sit an-
numerare Sententias.
Nam de Figuris Deo-
rum & de Locis atque
Sedibus & Actione
Vita, multa dicuntur,
&c.*

" *Giants*, as an excellent Person speaks, in all
" *other Kinds of Literature, should prove such*
" *Dwarfs in Divinity*, that they might go to
" School to get a Lesson from the most ignorant
" of Christians that know any Thing at all.
Any one that will but give himself the Trouble to peruse their Opinions about GOD, as they lie scattered in their Writings, or even where they are propos'd to more Advantage by those, who have collected and put them together, will soon be convinc'd of how low a Stature their Divinity was, and how justly the Apostle Paul said, that by their *Wisdom they knew not GOD*. All their Knowledge of GOD was no more than plain and gross Ignorance, of which the best of them were not ignorant, and therefore *Thales*, *Solon*, *Socrates*, and many others spoke either *Nothing* of GOD at all, or that which was *next to Nothing*.

And it had been well for others, if they had done so too: What they spoke, not only falling short of a sufficient Account; but presenting most abominable and mis-shapen Notions about GOD; of which we have a large Account in *Cicero de Natura Deorum*.

III. Besides that endless Variety amongst different Persons, in their Opinions about a Deity, which is no mean Evidence of their Darkeness, even the very same Persons, who seem to give the best Accounts, are wavering and uncertain, say and unsay, seem positive in one Place, and immediately in the very next Sentence seem to be uncertain and fluctuating. Thus it is with them all, and thus it usually is with Persons who are but groping in the Dark, and know not well how to extricate themselves.

IV. They who go furthest, have never adventured to give any methodical Account. They wanted Materials for this; and therefore give but dark Hints here and there. Cicero, who would make one expect such an Account, while he inscribes his Book *De Natura Deorum*, yet establishes scarce any Thing; but spends his Time in refuting the Opinion of others, without daring to advance his own.

De Natura Deorum,
Lib. 2. *An, inquit,*
oblitus es quod Initio
dixerim, facilius me
talibus de Rebus, quod
non sentirem quam
quod sentirem dicere
posse.

V. They who have gone furthest, are too narrow in their Accounts, they are manifestly defective in the most material Things. They are all reserv'd about the Number of the Gods. 'Tis true the best do own that there is one Supreme; but then there is scarce any of them positive that there are no more Gods save one. No not Socrates himself, who is suppos'd to die a Martyr for this Truth, durst own this plainly. And while this is undetermin'd, all Religion is left loose and uncertain; and Mankind cannot know how to distribute their Regard to the several Deities. Hence another Defect arises, and that is about the Supereminency of the Divine Excellencies. Albeit the Supreme Being may be own'd Superior in Order; yet the Inferior Deities being suppos'd more immediate in their Influence, this will subtract from the Supreme Deity much of his Respect and bestow it elsewhere. Moreover, about GOD's creating Power their Accounts are very uncertain, few of them owning it plainly. Nor are any of them plain enough about the special Providence of GOD, without which it is impossible to support Religion in the World.

VI. As their Accounts are too narrow, so in what they do own, they are too general. But will this maintain Religion? No, by no Means. But there must be a particular Discovery of these Things. Well, do they afford this? Nay, so far are they from explaining themselves to any Purpose here, that industriously they keep in dark Generals. The
divine.

divine Excellencies, unless it be a few negative ones, they do seldom attempt any Explication of: His *Providence* they dare not attempt any particular Account of. The Extent of it to all

— *Doctrinam de Providentia Rerum particularisive Gratia a Veteribus (quatenus ex eorum Libris qui extant, collegi potest) remissius credi observamus, Herbert de Veritate, P. 271, 272.*

particular Actions is deny'd by many of their Schools, own'd distinctly by few, if any; but particularly clear'd up by none of them. The *Laws* whereby he rules Men are no where declar'd. When some of them are insisted on in their *Ethicks*, the Authority of GOD in them, which is the only supreme Ground of Obedience, and that which alone can lay any Foundation for our Acceptance in that Obedience at GOD's Hand, is no where taken notice of. The *Holiness* of the

divine Nature, which is the great Restraint from Sin, is little notic'd, if not where some of the more abominable Evils are spoke of. The *Goodness* of GOD as a *Rewarder* is not by any of them clear'd up. And yet upon these Things the *Whole of Religion* hangs; which by them are either wholly pass'd over, or mention'd in Generals, or darken'd by Explications that give no Light to the Generals; at least, and for most Part are so far from explaining, that they obscure, nay corrupt them by blending pernicious Fallhoods with the most valuable Truths.

VII. The Discoveries they offer are not for most Part proven, but meerly asserted. Notions they are most of them learn'd from Tradition, and they were, it would seem, at a Loss about Arguments to support them. Where the greatest Certainty is required, least is found.

VIII. Where they do produce Arguments, as they do sometimes for the *Being* and *Providence* of GOD in General, they are too dark and nice, both in Matter and Manner, to be of any Use to the Generality of Mankind.

To have produc'd particular Instances for the Justification of each of these Observations, would have been too tedious. Any one that would desire to be satisfy'd about them, may be fully furnish'd with Instances, if he will give himself the Trouble to peruse *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, *Diogenes Laertius his Lives of the Philosophers*, or *Stanley's Lives*; but especially the *Writings* of the several *Philosophers* themselves concerning this Subject. Nor will this Task be very tedious, if he is but directed to the Places where they treat of GOD: For they insist not long

long on this Subject, and the better and wiser Sort of them are most sparing.

When I review these Observations, which occur'd by reading the *Works* of the *Heathens*, and their Opinions concerning God, I could not but admire the gross *Inadvertency*, to give it no worse Word, of the *Deists*, (and more especially of the learn'd *Herbert*, who was a Man of Learning and Application) who pretend that the Knowledge of those *general Attributes* of GOD, his *Greatness* and his *Goodness* vulgarly express'd by *Optimus Maximus*, are sufficient: Since it is plain from what has been said, That *this general Knowledge* is of no Significancy to influence such a *peculiar, high and extensive, practical Regard* to the *Deity*, as the Notion of *Religion* necessarily imports. Of which even *Blount* was, it seems, aware, when he confesses in his *Religio Laici*, that there is a Necessity that his Articles must be well explain'd. 2. It is plain that the *Philosophers*, and consequently the *common People*, did not understand well the Meaning of *those Articles*, or of those *general Notions* concerning God, at least, in any Degree answerable to the *End* we now have in View.

I dare submit these Observations as to their Truth to any impartial Person, who will be at Pains to try them, upon the granting of a twofold reasonable Demand. 1. That he will consult either the Authors themselves, or those, who cannot be suspected of any Byas, by their being *Christians*, which I hope *Deists* will think just; such are *Cicero*, *Diogenes Laertius*, &c. or those who have made large Collections, not merely of their *general Sentences* concerning God; but of their *Explications*. In which Sort *Stanley* excels. 2. I require that, in reading the *Authors*, they do not lay hold on a *general Assertion*, and so run away, without considering the Whole of what the *Authors* speak on that Head. The Reasons why I make these Demands, are, *First*, Some Persons designing, for one End or other, to illustrate Points in *Christianity* with Quotations from *Heathen Authors*, take up *general Expressions*, which seem congruous with, or may be the same, which the Scripture uses, without considering how far they differ, when they both descend to a particular Explication of those general Words. Again, some *Christians*, writing the *Lives of Philosophers* and collecting their Opinions, are misled by Favour to some particular Persons, of whom they have conceiv'd a *vast Idea*, and therefore either suppress or wrest what may detract from the Person they design to magnify. *M. Dacier*, for Instance, has written the *Life of Plato*: But that Account is the Issue

of a peculiar Favour for that Philosopher's Notions in general; and it is evidently the Aim of the Writer to reconcile *his Sentiments* to the *Christian Religion*. A Work that some others have attempted before. To this Purpose *Plato's* Words are wrested, and such Constructions put on them, as can no other Way be justify'd, but by supposing that no material Points of the *Christian Religion* could be hid from *Plato* or his Master *Socrates*. And yet after all, *Plato's* gross Mistakes, and that in Matters of the highest Import, yea and such of them, as are suppos'd, generally, to lie within the Reach of *Nature's Light*, are so obvious and discernible, that the Evidence of the Thing extorts an Acknowledgement. To

M. Dacier's *Life* of *Plato*, P. 141.

give but one Instance, after the Writer has made a great Deal ado about *Plato's* Knowledge of the *Trinity*; a Story which hath been oft told, but never yet proven, it is plainly acknowledged, that he speaks of the *Three Persons* of the *Deity* as of *Three Gods*, and *Three different Principles*, which is, in Plain Terms, to throw down all that was built before, and prove that *Plato* knew neither the *Trinity*, nor the *One true GOD*. Finally, general Sentences occur in those Authors, which seem to import much more Knowledge of *GOD*, than a further Search into their Writings will allow us to believe they had: For any one will quickly see, that in those general Expressions, they spoke as Children that understand not what they say, or at least, have but a very imperfect Notion of it. And tho' this may seem a severe Reflection on these great Men; yet I am sure none shall impartially read them, who will not own it just.

But now, to return to our Subject, this *sufficient Discovery* of *GOD* not being found amongst those, who were Strangers to the *Scriptures* and *Christianity*, let us next proceed to consider those, who have had Access to the *Scriptures* and liv'd since the *Christian Religion* obtain'd in the World. And here it must be own'd, that since that Time, *Philosophers* have much improv'd *Natural Theology*, and given a far better Account of *GOD* and demonstrate many of his *Attributes* from *Reason*, that were little known before, to the Confusion of *Atheists*. From the excellent Performances of this Kind, which are many, I design not to destract. I am content a due Value be put on them: But still I am for putting them only in their own Place, and ascribing no more to them, than is really their due. Wherefore notwithstanding what has been now readily granted, I think I may confidently offer the few following Remarks on them.

I. We might justly refuse them, as no proper Measure of the *Ability* of *unassisted Reason*, in as much as it cannot be deny'd, that *the Light*, whereby those Discoveries have been made, was borrowed from the *Scriptures*: Of which none needs any other Proof, than meerly to consider the vast Improvement of Knowledge, as to those Matters, immediately after the spreading of *Christianity*, which cannot, with any Shew of Reason be otherwise accounted for, than by owning that this Light was deriv'd from *the Scriptures*, and the *Observation* and *Writings* of *Christians*, which made even *the Heathens* ashamed of their former Notions of GOD. But not to insist on this.

II. Who have made those Improvements of *Natural Theology*? Not the *Heathens* or *Deists*. It is little any of them have done this Way. The accurate Systems of *Natural Theology* have come from *Christian Philosophers*, who do readily own that the Scripture points them, not only to the *Notions* of GOD they therein deliver, but also to many of the *Proofs* likewise, and that their *Reasons*, if not thus assisted, would have fail'd them as much, as that of the *old Philosophers* did them.

III. It is worthy our Observation, that such of the *Christians*, who favour the *Deists* most, such as the *Socinians* and some others, do give most lame and defective Accounts of GOD. They who lean much to *Reason*, their Reason leads them into those Mistakes about the *Nature* and *Knowledge* of GOD, which tend exceedingly to weaken the *practical Influence* of the *Notion* of a GOD. And we have Reason to believe that the *Deists* will be found to join with them, in their gross Notions of GOD, as ignorant of the *free Actions* of Men, before they are done, as not so particularly concern'd about them in his *Providence*, as many such like Notions, which sap the Foundations of all practical Regard to GOD.

IV. But let the best of *these Systems* be condescended on, they cannot be allow'd to contain *sufficient Discoveries* of GOD: For, it is evident beyond Contradiction, that they are neither full enough in explaining what they, in the general own; nor, do they extend to some of those Things which are of most Necessity and Influence to support *practical Religion*. They prove a *Providence*, but cannot pretend to give any such Account of it, as can either encourage or direct to any *Dependence* on, *Trust* in, or *practical Improvement* of it. And the like might be made appear of *other Perfections*. Again they cannot pretend to any tolerable Account of the *remunerative Bounty*, the *pardonning*

Mercy and Grace of GOD, on which the *Whole of Religion*, as Things now stand, intirely hangs. Can they open these Things so far as is necessary to hold up *Religion* in the World? They who know what *Religion* is, and what they have done, or may do, will not say it.

V. In their Proofs of these Truths, there must be own'd a *Want of that Evidence*, which is requisite to compose the Mind in the Persuasion of them, and establish it against Objections. Let *Scripture Light* be laid aside, which removes Objections; and let a Man have no more to confirm him of those Truths, save these Arguments, the Difficulties daily occurring from obvious Providences will jumble the *Observer* so, that he will find these Proofs *scarce sufficient* to keep him firm in his Assent to the Truths; and if so, far less will they be able to influence his Practice suitably against Temptations to Sin. Now this may arise, not so much from the *real Weakness* of the Arguments, which may be concludent, as from *this*, that most of them are rather drawn *ab Absurdo*, than from any *clear Light* about the Nature of the Object known; and hence there comes not *that Light* along, as to Difficulties, which is necessary to remove them. And tho' these Arguments silence in Dispute, and close the Adversaries Mouth; yet they don't satisfy the Mind. Moreover, some, of no mean Consideration, have pretended, that many of these Demonstrations, even as to some of the most considerable Attributes of GOD, are inconcludent: Particularly they have asserted, That the *Unity* of GOD was not to be proven by the *Light of Nature*, nor *special Providence*: But not to carry the Matter thus far, it is certain that the Force of these Demonstrations must lie very secret, that such Persons, who own'd the Truths and bore them good Will; yet could not find it.

Much more might be said on this Head, but I am not willing to invalidate these Arguments, or even to shew all that might, perhaps, not only be said, but made appear against them. But whatever there is as to this, it is certain that the *Discoveries* of GOD by *Nature's Light* being small, are easily clouded, by intangling Difficulties arising from the dark Occurrences of *Providence*, and the *natural Weakness* and *Unstayedness* of our *Minds*, which are always to be found in Matters sublime, and not attended with *strong Evidence*. And Attention in this Case will increase the Darkness, and force on such an Acknowledgment as *Simonides* made to *Hiero* the Tyrant of *Syracuse*, That the longer he thought about GOD, the more difficult he found to give any Account of him.

VI. They

VI. They must, whatever be allow'd as to *their Validity* in themselves, be own'd of *no Use* to the Generality, nay, the far greater Part of Mankind. No Man who knows them and knows the World, will pretend that the one Half of Mankind is able to comprehend the Force of them. And so they are still in the Dark about GOD; which quite everts the whole Storie about the *Sufficiency* of the *natural Discoveries* of a *Deity*.

VII. It is plain, That there is no serving GOD, walking with or worshipping of him without Thoughts, and serious ones too, of him. Now *his Nature* and *Excellencies* are *Infinite*, how then shall we conceive of them? Our Darkness and Weakness will not allow us to think of him as *he is*, and conceive those Perfections as they are *in him*. And to conceive otherwise is dangerous. We may mistake in other Things without Sin; but to frame wrong, and other Conceptions of GOD and his Excellencies, than the Truth of the Thing requires, is dangerous and sinful; for it frames *an Idol*. Now tho' this Difficulty may be easy to less attentive Minds; yet it will quite confound Persons who are in earnest, and understand what they are doing, in their Approaches to GOD. Nor can ever the Minds of such be satisfy'd in our present State, *otherwise than by GOD's telling us, how we are to conceive of him, and authorizing us to do it in a Way of Condescension to our present dark and infirm State.*

VIII. I cannot forbear to notice, as what wants not its own Weight in this Case, tho' in Condescension we did a little wave Arguments drawn from the *practical Influence of Truths*, that however great the Improvements, as to Notions of Truths, concerning the *Nature of the Deity* may of late have been; yet the *Effects* of these Notices in their highest Improvement, have been far from recommending them, as *sufficient to the End* we have now in View. This natural Theology has rather made Men more learn'd than more pious. Where Scripture Truth has not been receiv'd in its *Love and Power*, Men have seldom been better'd by their Improvements in *natural Theology*. But we see in Experience, That they who can prove most and best in these Matters, evidence least Regard to the *Deity* in their *Practice*.

I shall add one Observation more, which at once inforces the Argument we are upon, against the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, and cuts off a pretended Retortion of it, against the *Christian Religion*; and it is this: *The Religion*, the *Deists* plead for, and are oblig'd to maintain, is a Religion that pleads Acceptance upon its own Account, which has

no Provision against *Guilt* and *Escapes*, as shall be demonstrate hereafter ; a *Religion* which consequently must be *more perfect*, and so requires a *more exact Knowledge* of the *Deity* in Order to its Support : Whereas, the *Christian Religion* is one which is calculate for Man in his *fallen State* : And the *Fall* is every where in it suppos'd, and a gracious Provision made against *Defects* in *Knowledge*, and *unallow'd practical Escapes*.

CHAP. V.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion, from its Defectiveness as to the Worship of GOD.

THE Argument we are to improve against the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion* in this Chapter, might have been considered as a Branch of the foregoing : But, that we may be the more distinct, and to shew a Regard unto the Importance of the Matter, we shall consider it as a *distinct Argument* by it self.

Now therefore, when we are to speak of the *Worship* of GOD, it is not of that *inward Veneration* that consists in *Acts of the Mind*, such as *Esteem*, *Fear*, *Love*, *Trust*, and the like ; but of the *outward, stated and solemn Way* of expressing this *inward Veneration*. That there should not only be an *inward Regard* to the *Deity* in our *Minds*, influencing the Whole of our *outward Deportment* : But that besides, there should be *fixed, outward and solemn Ways* of exercising and expressing these *inward Actings*, seems evident beyond any reasonable Exception.

1. From the *general Agreement* of the *World* in this Point. All the World has own'd *some Worship* necessary. Every

Herbert de Veritate, pag. 271, 272. Nation and People had their *peculiar Way* of *Worship*. 'Tis true, most of them were *Ridiculous*, many of them *plainly Wicked*, and all of them *Vain* : But this makes not against the Thing in general ; only it bespeaks the *Darkness* of *Nature's Light*, as to the *Way* of managing in *Particulars*, that which in the *General* it directs to.

2. The *Deists* themselves own this much. Herbert in his Treatise, *de Religione Gentilium*, confesses it a second Branch of the generally receiv'd Religion, for which he pleads, *That GOD is to be worshipp'd*. 'Tis true, in his next, while he tells us that *Vertue* and *Piety* were own'd to be the principal Means of *Worshipping* him, he would seem to preclude us from the Benefit of the former Acknowledgment. But yet he dares not assert, That this which he condescends on was the only Way, and so pretend the *Worship*, we speak of, unnecessary: But being to hold forth the Sufficiency of this natural Religion, he was loth to speak any more of that, which would lead him if he had considered it, unto a Discovery of its Nakedness. But others of the *Deists* do own the Necessity of such a *Worship*, and pretend *Prayer* and *Praise* sufficient to this Purpose, as he also doth in his other Treatises, particularly *de Veritate*.

Herbert *de Veritate*, ubi supra 272. Nos interea externum illum Dei Cultum (sub aliqua Religionis Specie) ex omni Seculo, Regione, Gente evicimus.

3. The same Reasons which plead for inward Acts, peculiarly directed to this End, plead for outward Veneration likewise. If we have Minds capable of this inward Veneration, so are we capable of outward Expressions; and are under the same Obligations to employ those latter Sort of Powers to the Honour of GOD, that binds us to the former. Nor is there more Reason why, besides that transient Regard we ought to pay him in all our Actions, there should be inward Acts peculiarly design'd to express our inward Veneration, than that there should be outward stated Acts, peculiarly design'd for the same Purpose.

4. The Nature of Society pleads loudly for this. Mankind as united in Societies, whether lesser, as Families; or greater, as other Societies, depend intirely on GOD; and therefore owe him Reverence and the Expression of it, in some joint and fixed Way. Publick Benefits require publick Acknowledgements: And this Sort of Dependence on and Subjection to the Deity should certainly have suitable Returns.

5. It is incontrollably evident, that many in the World, do shake off all Regard to the Deity, and walk in an open Defiance to him, and those Laws which he has establish'd. Certainly therefore, it is the Duty of such as keep firm, openly to testify their Dependence on and Regard to the Deity, which is not sufficiently done by the Performance of those Things, which are materially according to the Appointment of GOD. For what Regard to GOD there is, influencing to those outward Acts,

Acts, cannot be clearly discern'd by Onlookers, who know not but *somewhat*, beside any *Regard* to the Authority of the *Law-giver*, may be at the Bottom of all. It is therefore necessary that there be *publick, solemn Actions*, directly and plainly importing our Avouchment of a *Regard* to him, in Opposition to these Affronts that are publickly offer'd to him.

6. *This Worship* is necessary in Order to maintain and cherish that *inward Veneration*. It is well known, however much we are bound to it; yet the Sense of this Obligation, and that *Veneration* it self to which we are oblig'd, is not so deeply riveted upon our Minds, but it needs to be cherished, and the Habits strengthened by Actings. It is not so easy for Men to do this by *inward Meditation*, who for most Part are little accusom'd to this Way, and can indeed scarce fix their Minds in this *inward Exercise* at all, especially if they have no fix'd Way of exercising it, but are left at Liberty to choose their own Way. *Religion* therefore must go out of the *World*, or there must be *stated* and *fix'd Ways* of exercising it. This is easily justifiable from Experience, which shews, That where once *publick Worship* is disregarded, any other Sort of *Respect* to the *Deity* quickly fails of its own accord.

7. It is necessary for the Benefit of humane Society. The Foundations of humane Society are laid upon the Notion of a *GOD*, and the Sacredness of Oaths, and the fix'd Notions of Right and Wrong, which all stand and fall together. Nor is there any Way of keeping up that *Regard* to those Things, which are the Props of humane Society, without such a *Worship of GOD*, as that we plead for. This all the *Law-givers* were of old satisfy'd about, and took Measures accordingly.

8. If *Religion* has any valuable End, then certainly this must be one main Part of it, to lead Man to future Happiness; which cannot with any Shew of Reason be alledg'd to consist in any Thing besides the Enjoyment of *GOD*. And it's plainly ridiculous to suppose, That Mankind can be kept up in any fix'd Expectation of, or close Pursuit after this, if not animated and enouraged by some, nay frequent Experiences of Commerce betwixt him and the *Deity* here. And it is foolish to pretend, That this is otherwise to be had in any Degree, answerable to this End, in any other Way, than in the Way of *design'd, fix'd, solemn and stated Worship*.

Now this much being said in the General for clearing the Necessity of such a *Worship* and the Importance of it in *Religion*; it remains that we prove the *Light of Nature* insufficient to direct us as to the Way of it. And this we conceive may be easily made appear from the few ensuing Grounds.

1. The manifest Mistakes all the World fell into, who were left in this Matter to the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*, abundantly evince the Incompetency of *Nature's Light* for Man's Direction, with Respect to the *Worship of GOD*. Every Nation had their *own Way of Worship*, and that stuff'd with *blasphemous, unworthy, ridiculous, ungrounded, impious and horrid Rites and Usages*; of which there are innumerable Accounts every where to be met with. We can no where in the *Heathen World* find any *Worship* that is not manifestly *unworthy* of and *injurious* to the *Glorious GOD*. Surely *that Light* that suffered the World to lose their Way so evidently, must be *sadly defective*. Their *Worship* was every where such, even where wise Men were the Instituters of it, that it could not satisfy any Person who had any true Notion of *GOD*, and was the Scorn of the Wise and Discerning. Nor can it with any Shew of Reason be pleaded, That *these Defects and Enormities* are to be charg'd, not on the *Defectiveness of Nature's Light*, but the *Negligence* of those who did not use it to that Advantage it might have been us'd: Since it has been above proven, That the only Way we can judge what *Nature's Light* can do, is by considering what it *has done* somewhere or other; and these Enormities did every where obtain. They were not peculiar to some Places; but wherever Men were left to the *meer Light of Nature*, there they fell into them.

2. These Ways of *Worship*, viz. *Prayer* and *Praise*, which are condescended upon by the *Deists*, and seem in general to have the Countenance of *Reason*; yet, as they are discover'd by *Nature's Light*, can no Way satisfy. Be it granted that *Nature's Light* directs to them in general, and binds them on us as Duty; yet it must be allow'd, that this is not enough; for the Difficulty is, how we shall in particular manage them to the *Glory of GOD* and our *own Advantage*. The Duty is stated in the General, and when we begin to think of Compliance with it, we find the *Light of Nature* like the *Egyptian Task masters*, set us our Work, and demand *Brick*, while yet it allows us *no Straw*. What endless Difficulties are we cast in, about the Matter of our *Prayers* and *Praises*? What Things shall we pray to *GOD*, and praise him for? How shall we be furnish'd with *such Discoveries* of the *Nature, Excellencies, Works of GOD*, and what Things are proper for us, as may be sufficient to guide us in our *Prayers* and *Praises*, and keep us up in a close Attendance on these Duties, in the whole Tract of our Lives, without wearying or fainting? Are we, because we know not what is good or ill for us, to hold in *meer Generals*, as the best of the *Philosophers*

phers thought? If so, will the Mind of Man, for so long a Tract of Time, be able to continue in this *general Way*, without Nauseating? Or, shall we descend to *Particulars*? If so, How shall Materials be furnish'd to us for such particular Addressees, who know so little of *GOD's Works*, or our own Wants? Again, Who shall teach us the *Way and Manner of Praying and Praising*, which will be acceptable to *GOD*? Shall every one's Fancy be the *Rule*? If there be a fix'd Rule, which, and where is it? Again, What Security have we from the *meer Light of Nature*, as to the *Success and Acceptance* of these Duties? It will be to no Advantage to except, *That GOD requires of us no more than he has directed us in*; for this is to beg the *main Question*: Were it once granted, That no more is required than what *Nature's Light* directs to, there might be some Countenance for this Plea, *That what it gives no Directions in, will not be insisted upon by GOD*; but this is plainly refus'd, and so the Difficulties remain. Nor is it to more Advantage to pretend, *That the Substance being agreed to, GOD will not insist upon Circumstances of Worship*: For, the Difficulties objected respect not *meerly the Circumstances*, but the very *substantial Parts* of these Duties. As to what may be pretended of the *Influence of the Hopes of eternal Life*, toward the keeping up Men in an Attendance on Duties, as to the particular Manner of the Performance of which, and the Grounds of Acceptance, they are entirely in the Dark: This Plea shall be fully consider'd afterwards. And as it is obvious, That no general Supposal of Benefit can for any long Tract of Time keep Men steady in the Performance of Actions, about the Nature and Acceptance of which they are in Doubt; so, it shall be made appear there is no Ground from the *meer Light of Nature* for any such *Hope of future Felicity*, as can relieve in this Case.

3. The plain Confession of the more thoughtful,
 Hornbeck *de Conversione Gentilium*, wife and discerning of the *Heathen World* plainly
Lib. 5. Cap. 6. B. 47. proves this. The Followers of the *fam'd Confucius*
 in *China*, tho' they own that there is *one supreme*
GOD; yet profess themselves ignorant of the
Way he is to be worshipped, and therefore think it safer to abstain from
Worshipping, than err in the *Assignment of improper Honour* to him.
Plato in his *second Alcibiades*, which he inscribes, of *Prayer*, makes it
 his Business to prove, *That we know not how to manage Prayer*, and there-
 fore concludes it *safer to abstain altogether, than err in the Manner*. *Alci-*
biades is going to the Temple to pray, *Socrates* meets him, dissuades
 him, and proves his *Inability to manage the Duty*, of which he is at
 Length

Length convinc'd; whereupon *Socrates* concludes, " You see, says he, " *That it is not at all safe for you to go and pray in the Temple----* I am " therefore of the Mind, it is much better for you to be silent.— " And it is necessary you should wait for some Person to teach you " how you ought to behave your selves, both towards the Gods and " Men. To which *Alcibiades* said, And when will that Time come, " *Socrates*? And who is he that will instruct me? With what Pleasure " should I look on him? To which he replies, He will do it who " takes a true Care of you. But methinks as we read in *Homer*, That " *Minerva* dissipated the Mist that cover'd *Diomedes*, and hindred him " from distinguishing GOD from Man; so it is necessary, That he " should in the first Place scatter the Darkeness that covers your Soul, " and afterwards give you these Remedies that " are necessary to put you in a Condition of " discerning Good and Evil; for at present you " know not how to make a Difference. *Alci-* " *biades* says, I think I must defer my Sacri- " fice to that Time. *Socrates* approves; You " have Reason, says he, it is more safe so to do, " than run so great a Risk. The sam'd *Epictet-* " *us* was so much of the same Mind, that he " knew no Way but to advise every one to fol- " low the Custom of their Country in Worship. Upon the same Account *Seneca* rejects all this " *Worship*. And memorable is the Confession of " *Jamblicus* a Platonick Philosopher, who liv'd in the " fourth Century. " It is not easy to know what " GOD will be pleas'd with, unless we be either immediately instruc- " ted by GOD our selves, or taught by some Person whom GOD hath " convers'd with, or arrive at the Knowledge of it by some divine " Means or other. Thus you see how much these great Men were " bemist in this Matter, and may easily conclude what the Case of " the rest of Mankind was.

We have the same Account of Socrates and Xenophon, of which see Stanley Pag. 75.

Epictet. Enchirid. Cap. 38.

Seneca Epist. 95. Jambl. de Vita Pythag. Cap. 28.

4. The very Nature of the Thing seems to plead against the Sufficiency of Reason in this Point: For it seems plainly to be founded on the clearest Notions of Nature's Light, that the *Worship* of GOD is to be regulated by the Will and Pleasure of GOD; which if he reveal not, how can we know it? Hence it was that the *Heathens* never pretended Reason, but always Revelation for their *Worship*. The Go-

vernours all of them did this. And *Plato* tells *Plato de Legibus.* us, "That Laws concerning divine Matters must be had from the *Delpbick Oracles.*"

Much more might be said on this Head, were it needful: But I am apprehensive this is a Point that the *Deists* will not be fond to dispute with us; not only because they are no great Friends to this *Worship*, but because they can say so little on this Head, which has any Shew of Reason: Of which their fam'd Leader *Herbert* was sufficiently aware, when he tells us in his third Article, "That *Vertue* is the principal Part of the *Worship* of *GOD*; whereby he owns, That there is indeed another Part of it, which he dare not name, because he knows not what to say about it.

CH A P. VI.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion, from its Defectiveness as to the Discovery, wherein Man's Happiness lies.

NEXT to the *Glory* of *GOD*, the indisputably *supreme End* of Man, and of the whole Creation, of which I am not now to discourse; the *Happiness* of Man, is past all peradventure, his chief *End*. Yea, perhaps if we speak properly, except as abovesaid, it is his only *End*. For whatever Man is capable of designing, is comprehended under this, being either what doth, or at least, is judg'd to contain somewhat of *Happiness* in it, or what is suppos'd to contribute to that wherein Satisfaction is understood to consist. Every Thing a Man aims at, is either aim'd at as *Good* in it self, or contributing to our *Good*. The *First* is a Part of our *Happiness*; the *Last* is not in proper Speech design'd, but the *Good* to which it contributes; and that still is as before a Part of our *Happiness*. If *Religion* is therefore any Way useful or sufficient, it must be so with Respect to this *End*. And since *Religion* not only claims some Regard from Man, but pleads the Preference:

ference to all other Things, and demands his *chief Concern*, and his being employed about it as the *main Business* of his Life, it must either contribute more toward *this End*, than any Thing else, may be able to lead Man to *this End*; otherwise it deserves not that Regard which it claims, and is indeed of little, if any Use to Mankind. If then we are able to evince that *Natural Religion* is not *sufficient* to lead Man to *that Happiness*, which all Men seek, and is indeed the *chief End* of Man, there will be no Place left for the Pretence of its *Sufficiency*, in so far as it is the Subject of this Controversie, betwixt the *Deists* and *us*. And this we conceive may be made appear many Ways. But in this Chapter we shall confine our selves to one of them.

If *Nature's Light* is not able to give any *tolerable Discovery* of *that* wherein Man's *Happiness* lies, and that it may by him be obtain'd, then surely it can never furnish us with a *Religion* that is able to conduct him to it. This cannot with any Shew of Reason be deny'd. It remains therefore that I make appear what I am now to subsume, That *Nature's Light is not able to discover wherein Man's Happiness lies, and its Attainableness*. Now this I think is fully made out by the following Considerations.

1. They who being left to the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*, have sought after *that Good* wherein Man's *Happiness* is to be had, could not come to any Agreement or Consistency among themselves. This is a Point of the first Importance, as being the Hinge whereon the Whole of a Man's Life must turn; the Spring which must set Man a going, and give Life to all his Actions, and to this they must all be directed. *This*, if any other Thing ought to be easily knowable, and if *Nature's Light* is a *sufficient Guide*, it must give evident Discoveries of. But, methinks, here is a great Sign of a Want of *this Evidence*: Great Men, learn'd Men, wise *Philosophers* and industrious Searchers of Truth have split upon this Point, into an endless Variety of Opinions; in so much, that *Varro* pretends to reckon up no less than 288 different Opinions. May I not now use the Argument of one of the *Deists*, in a Case which he falsely supposes to be alike, and thus in his own Words argue upon this Point (only putting in, *The Discoveries of Nature's Light about Happiness, or the Evidence of those Discoveries in Place of the Evidence of the Reasons of the Christian Religion*, against which he argues) If the Discoveries of it were evident, there could be no longer any Contention or Difference about the chief Good; all Men

Oracles of Reason,
P. 206.

Men would imbrace the same and acquiesce in it : No Prejudice would prevail against the Certainty of such a Good. It is every Man's greatest Business here to labour for his Happiness, and consequently none would be backward to know it. And, if all do not agree in

Ibid. P. 201. it, those Marks of Truth in it are not visible, which are necessary to draw an Assent. But whatever there is of this, it is a most certain Argument of Darkness, that there is so great a Difference, where the Searchers are many, it's every one's Interest to find, and the Business and Search is ply'd with great Application.

2. The greatest of the Philosophers have been plainly mistaken in it. They espous'd Opinions in this Matter, which are not capable of any tolerable Defence. Solon the Athenian Law-giver

Stanley, P. 26. defin'd them happy, who are competently furnish'd Life of Solon, with outward Things, act honestly and live temperately. Socrates held, That there was but one chief Good, which was Knowledge, if we may believe

Diogenes Laertius in his Life. Aristotle, if we may take the same Author's Words for it, places it in Vertue, Health and outward Conveniency, which no Doubt was his Opinion, since he approv'd Solon's Definition of the chief Good; and herein he was followed by his numerous School.

Pythagoras tells us that the Knowledge of the Perfections of the Soul is the chief Good. It is true, he seems, at other Times, to speak somewhat differently; of which we may speak afterwards. Zeno tells us that it lies in living according to Nature. Cloanthes

Ibid. P. 462. adds, That according to Nature is according to Vertue. Chrysippus tells us, That it is to live according to expert Knowledge of Things which happen naturally. It is needless to spend Time in reckoning up innumerable others, who all run the same Way, placing Happiness in that which is not able to afford it, as being finite, of short Continuance, fickle and uncertain. 'Tis not my Design to confute those several Opinions. 'Tis evident to any one, that they are all confin'd to Time, and upon this very Account, fail of what can make us happy.

3. They who seem to come some nearer the Matter, and talk sometimes of Conformity to GOD, its being the chief Good, that it is our End to belike GOD, and the like, as Pythagoras

Stanley, P. 541. and some others, but especially Plato, who goes further

further than any of the rest; yet cannot justly be alledged to have made the Discovery, because we have not any Account of their Opinions clearly delivered by themselves, but Hints here

Ibid. Pag. 192.
Cap. 27.

and there gathered up from their Writings, which are very far from satisfying us as to their Mind: Besides they are so variable, and express themselves so differently, in different Places, that it is hard to find their Mind. Nay, I may add, they are industriously and of Design obscure. This *Alcinous* the *Platonick Philosopher* tells us plainly enough in his *Doctrine of Plato*, which is insert at Length in *Stanley's Lives*, *Plato* says, "That he thought the Discovery of the chief Good was not easy, and if it were found out, it was not safe to be declared. And that for this Reason, he did communicate his Thoughts about it to very few, and those of his most intimate Acquaintance. Now the plain Meaning of all this, in my Opinion is, That he could not tell wherein *Happiness* consists, or what *that* is, which is able to afford it: Or, at most; that tho' one Way or other in his Travels, by his Studies or Converse, he had got some Notions about it; yet he did not sufficiently understand them, and was not able to satisfy himself or others about them, and that therefore, he either intirely suppress'd, or would not plainly speak out his Thoughts, lest the World should see his Ignorance, and that tho' his Words differ'd, yet in very Deed he knew no more of the Matter than others. For to say, That, upon Supposition, his Discoveries had been satisfying, as to Truth and Clearness, and that he was capable to prove and explain them, they were not fit to be made known to the World, is to speak the grossest of Nonsense; for nothing was so necessary to be known, and known universally, as the *chief Good*, which every one is oblig'd to seek after. To know this and conceal the Discovery is the most malicious and invidious Thing that can be thought of. And rather than charge this on *Plato*, I think it safer to charge *Ignorance* on him. He speaks somewhat liker Truth than others, while he tells us, *That Happiness consists in the Knowledge of the chief Good, that Philosophers, who are sufficiently purify'd, are allow'd after the Dissolution of their Bodies, to sit down at the Table of the Gods and view the Field of Truth; That to be made like GOD is the chief Good, that to follow GOD is the chief Good.* Some such other Expressions we find. But what does all this say? Does it inform us that *Plato* understood our *Happiness* to consist in the eternal Enjoyment of *GOD*? Some, who are loth to think that *Plato* mis'd any Truth of Importance.

Importance which is contain'd in the Scripture, think so: But for my Part, I see no Reason to confirm me from all this that *Plato* understood any Thing tolerably about the *Enjoyment of GOD*, either in Time or after Time, or that he was fix'd and determin'd wherein the *Happiness* of Man consists, or that really any such *State of future Felicity* is certainly attainable. All this was only a *Heaven* of his own framing and Fancy fitted for *Philosophers*, for the being of which, he could give no tolerable Arguments. And all this Account satisfies me no more that *Plato* understood wherein *Happiness* consists, than the following does, that he knew the *Way* of reaching it, which I shall transcribe from the same Chapter of *Alcinous his Doctrine of Plato*, "*Beatitude is a good Habit of the Genius, and this Similitude to GOD we shall obtain, if we enjoy convenient Nature in our Manner, Education and Sense, according to Law, and chiefly by Reason and Discipline, and Institution of Wisdom, withdrawing our selves as much as is possible from humane Affairs, and being conversant in these Things only, which are understood by Contemplation: The Way to prepare, and as it were, to cleanse the Demon that is in us, is to initiate our selves into higher Disciplines, which is done by Musick, Arithmetick, Astronomy and Geometry, not without some Respect of the Body, by Gymnastick, whereby it is made more ready for the Actions both of War and Peace.*" I pretend not to understand him here: But this I understand from him, that one of *Three* is certain, either he understood not himself, or had no Mind others should understand, or that he was the most unmeet Man in the World to instruct Mankind, about this important Point, and to explain Things about which the World was at a Loss. When Men speak at this Rate, we may put what Meaning we please upon their Words.

4. It is plain that none of them have clearly come to know themselves, or inform others that *Happiness is not to be had here, that it consists in the eternal Enjoyment of GOD after Time, that this is attainable.* These are Things whereabout there is a deep Silence, not so much as a Word of them, far less any Proof. If ever we were to expect such a Thing, we might look for it from those, who have not merely touch'd at this Subject by the by, and in dark Hints; but have discoursed of *moral Ends* on set Purpose, such as *Cicero* and *Seneca*. *Cicero* frequently tells us that he design'd to enrich his native Country with a Translation of all that was valuable in the *Greek Philosophers*, he had perus'd them for this End, and thus accomplish'd, he sets himself to write of *moral Ends*, which he does in five Books. Here we may expect somewhat to the

the Purpose: But if we do, we are disappointed. The *first* Book sets off *Epicurus's* Opinion about *Happiness* with a great Deal of *Rhetorick*. The *second* overthrows it. The *third* represents the *Stoicks* Opinion. And the *fourth* confutes it. The *fifth* represents and asserts the *Peripateticks* Opinion, which had been as easily overthrown as any of them. And this is all you are to expect here, without one Word of *GOD* the *Enjoyment* of him, or any Thing of that Kind, which favours of a Life after this. *Seneca* writes again a Book *de Vita Beata* consisting of 32 Chapters. Here we may find somewhat possibly. And indeed if one should hear him state the Question, as he does in his *second* Chapter, he would expect some great Matters from him. "*Quaramus quid optime factum sit, non quid usitatissimum: Et quid nos in Possessione Felicitatis aeternae constituat, non quid vulgo, Veritatis pessimo Interpreti, probatum sit. Vulgus autem tam chlamydatos, quam Coronam voco:*" What may we not now expect? But, after this, I assure you, you are to look for no more Words about *Eternity*, nor any Thing more, but a jejune Discourse in pretty Sentences, about the *Stoicks* Opinion, representing that a Man would be happy, if his Passions were extinct, and he were perfectly pleas'd with the Condition he is in, be it what it will. Now after this, who can dream that *Nature's Light* is sufficient to satisfy here? Is every Man able to discover that which *Philosophers*, the greatest of them, after the greatest Application, fail'd so signally about, that scarce any of them came near it, none of them reach'd it?

5. Nor will it appear strange, that the *Heathen Philosophers* of old, should be so much at a Loss, about *future Happiness*, to any one who considers how difficult, if not impossible it must be for any, who rejects *Revelation*, and betakes himself to the *meer Light of Nature* to arrive at the wish'd for, and necessary Assurance of *eternal Felicity*, after this Life, even at this present Time, after all the great Improvements, which the *rational Proofs* of a *future State* have obtain'd, since *Christianity* prevail'd in the World. If *Nature's Light*, now under its highest Improvements, proves unable to afford full Assurance, and still leaves us to fluctuate in Uncertainty about *future Happiness*; no wonder they should be in the dark, who were Strangers to these Improvements.

That the Arguments for a *future State*, since *Christianity* obtain'd, have receiv'd a vast Improvement from *Christian Divines* and *Philosophers*, cannot modestly be deny'd. The Performances of *Plato* and

Cicero, on this Point, which were the best among the Ancients, are, when compar'd with our late Christian Writers, but like the Trifles of a Boy at School, or the rude Effays of a Novice, in Comparison to the most elaborate and compleat Performances of the greatest Masters, if they bear even the same Proportion. He who knows not this, knows nothing in these Matters. Yea, to that Degree have they improv'd those Arguments, that it is utterly impossible for any Man, who gives all their Reasons *for the Continuance of the Soul after Death*, with their Answers to the trifling Pretences of the Opposers of this Conclusion, a fair Hearing and due Consideration, to acquiesce rationally in the contrary Assertion of *Atheists* and *moral Deists*; or, not to favour, at least, this Opinion, as what is highly probable, if not absolutely certain.

But after all, if we are left to seek Assurance of this from *unassisted Light of Nature*, that certainly *GOD* has provided for, and will actually bestow upon Man, and more especially Man who is now a Sinner, future and eternal Felicity; we will find our selves plung'd amidst inextricable Difficulties, out of which the *Light of Nature* will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to extricate us. 'Tis one Thing to be perswaded of the future separate Subsistence of our Souls after Death, and another to know in what Condition they shall be; and yet more to be assur'd that *after Death* our Souls shall be possess'd of eternal Happiness. It is precisely about this last Point we are now to speak. The Arguments drawn from *Nature's Light* will scarce fix us in the steady Persuasion of future and eternal Felicity. There is a great Odds betwixt our Knowledge of future Punishments, and the Grounds whereby we are led to it, and our Persuasion of future and eternal Rewards. Upon Enquiry the like Reasons will not be found for both. Our Notices about eternal Rewards, when the Promises of it contain'd in the Scriptures are set aside, will be found liable to many Objections, hardly to be solved by the *meer Light of Nature*, which do not so much affect the Proofs advanced for future Punishments. Besides, the Entrance of Sin, its universal Prevalence in the World and the Consequences following upon it, have so benighted Man, as to any Knowledge, he otherwise might have had about eternal Happiness, that now it will be found a Matter of the utmost Difficulty, if not a plain Impossibility for him to reach Assurance of eternal Felicity by the *mere Light of Nature*, however improv'd.

The Pleas drawn from the *Holiness* and *Justice* of GOD say much for the *certain Punishment*, after this Life, of many notorious Offenders, who have wholly escaped *Punishment* here; especially as they are strengthened by other collateral Considerations clearing and enforcing them.

But, whether the Pleas for *future and eternal Rewards*, from the *Justice* and *Goodness* of GOD, on the one Hand; and the *Sufferings* of Persons really guilty of Sin, but in Comparison of others *Vertuous*, on the other; will with equal Firmness conclude, That GOD is *obliged* to, or certainly *will Reward* their *imperfect Vertue*, and compensate their *Sufferings*, may, and perhaps not without Reason, be questioned.

That it is congruous, *Vertue* should be rewarded, may perhaps easily be granted. But what that *Reward* is, which it may from *divine Justice* or *Bounty* claim, it will not be easy for us to determine, if we have no other Guide than the *meer Light of Nature*. The Man who perfectly performs his Duty is secured against the Fears of *Punishment*, and has Reason to rest fully assur'd of GOD's Acceptance and Approbation of what is every Way agreeable to his *Will*. He has a perfect, inward Calm in his own Conscience, is disturbed with no Challenges, and has the Satisfaction and inward Complacency, resulting from his having acquit himself according to his Duty: His Conscience assures him he has done nothing to provoke GOD to withdraw Favours already given, or to withhold further Favours. And tho' he cannot easily see Reason to think GOD oblig'd, either to continue what he freely gave, or accumulate further Effects of *Bounty* upon him, or to protract his *Happiness* to Eternity; yet he has the Satisfaction of knowing, that he hath not render'd himself unworthy of any Favour. This *Reward* is the necessary and unavoidable Consequence of *perfect Obedience*.

But this comes not up to the Point. That which the *Light of Nature* must assure us of, is, That *vertuous Men*, on Account of their *Vertue*, may claim and expect, besides this, a further Reward, and that of no less Consequence, than *eternal Felicity*. Now if I mistake it not, when the Promise of GOD, which cannot be known without *Revelation*, is laid aside, the *meer Light of Nature* will find it difficult to fix upon solid Grounds, for any Assurance as to this. Many thorny Difficulties must be got through. Not a few perplexing Questions must be solv'd. If it is said, That the *Justice* of GOD necessarily obliges him, besides that *Reward* necessarily resulting from *perfect Obedience*, of which above,

further to recompence, even the most exact and perfect Performance of our Duty, antecedently to any Promise given to that Effect with *future and eternal Felicity*; it may be enquired, How it shall be made appear that *Vertue*, suppose it as perfect as you will, can be said to merit, and to merit *so great a Reward*? May not GOD, without *Injustice*, turn to *Nothing* an innocent Creature?

See the Excellency of Theology, &c. by T. H. R. Boil E. P. 25, 26, 27, &c. and Confid. about the Recon. of Reason and Rel. by T. E. P. 21. 22.

Sure I am, no mean nor incompetent Judges have thought so. Where is the *Injustice* of removing or taking away what he freely gave, and promised not to continue? Is it modest or safe for us, without the most convincing Evidences of the Inconsistency of the Thing, to limit the Power GOD, or put a *Cannot* on the Almighty? And does not the very *Possibility* of the *Annihilation* of an innocent Creature, in a Consistency with *Justice*, tho' GOD, for other Reasons, should never think fit to do it, intirely enervate this Plea? If GOD without *Injustice* may take away the *Being* of an innocent Creature, how is it possible to evince, That, in *Justice*, he must reward it with *eternal Happiness*? Again, if we may, for our *Vertue*, claim *eternal Felicity*, as due in *Justice*, may it not be enquir'd what Exercise of *Vertue*, for how long a Time continu'd, is *sufficient* to give us this Title to *eternal Rewards*? If the *Bounty* and *Goodness* of GOD is insisted on, as the Ground of this Claim, the Plea from *Justice* seems deserted. And here again it may be enquir'd whether the *Goodness* of GOD is necessary in its Egress? Whether the *Bounty* of GOD ought not to be understood, to respect those Things, which are absolutely at the Giver's Pleasure to grant or withhold? Whether, in such Matters, we can be assured, that *Bounty* will give us this or that, which yet we want, is not in *Justice* due, nor secured to us by any Promise? Further it may be enquired how far must *Goodness* extend it self as to *Rewards*? Is it not supposable, that it may stop short of *eternal Felicity*, and think a *less Reward* *sufficient*? Of so great Weight have these, and the like Difficulties appeared to not a few, and those not of the more stupid Sort of Mankind, that they have not doubted to assert boldly, That even *innocent Man*, without *Revelation* and a positive Promise, could never be assur'd of *eternal Rewards*. And how the *Light of Nature* can disengage us from these Difficulties, were Man perfectly innocent, I do not well understand.

But,

But whatever there is of this, the *Entrance of Sin* and the Consideration of Man's Case as involv'd in *Guilt*, has cast us upon new and yet greater Difficulties. From this present Condition, wherein we find all Mankind without Exception involv'd, a whole Shoal of Difficulties emerge, never, I am afraid, to be remov'd by *unassisted Reason*.

Now, it may be enquir'd, *What Obedience* is it that can entitle us to *eternal Felicity*? If none, save that which is *perfect* will serve, who shall be the better for *this Reward*? Who can pretend to this *perfect* or *sinless Obedience*? If *imperfect Obedience* may, How shall we be sure of this? How shall he who deserves *Punishment* claim, demand and expect *Reward*, a great *Reward*, yea, the greatest *Reward*, *eternal Happiness*? If the *Goodness* of GOD is pleaded, and it is said, 'That tho' we cannot expect in *strict Justice* to have our *imperfect Obedience* rewarded; yet we may hope it from the *Bounty* of GOD; beside, what was above mov'd against this in a more plausible Case, when we were speaking of *innocent Man*, it may be further enquir'd, Whether, tho' *infinite Bounty* might deal thus graciously with Man, if he were *perfectly Righteous*, it may not yet withhold its Favours, or at least, stop short of *eternal Felicity* with the best among Sinners? Again, What *Degree of Imperfection* is it that will prejudice this Claim? What may consist with it? Who is Good in that Sense, which is necessary to qualify for this Expectation? Is there any such Person existent? What Way shall we be sure of this? Is it to be measur'd by *outward Actions* only, or are *inward Principles* and *Aims* to come in Consideration? Who can know these save GOD? If it be said, We can know our selves to be such: I answer, How shall we maintain any Confidence of *future*, nay *eternal Rewards*, while Conscience tells us, we deserve *Punishment*? What if by the *meer Light of Nature* we can never be assur'd of *Forgiveness*? How shall we then by it be sure of *eternal Rewards*? If we are not rewarded here, how can we know but that it has been for our *Sins* that *good Things have been withheld from us*? May not this be presum'd the Consequence of our *known Sins*, or more *covert Evils*, which Self-love has made us overlook? If we suffer, yet do we suffer more than our *Sins* deserve, or even so much? If we think so, will we be sustain'd Judges competent of the Quality of Offences, and their Demerit which are done against GOD, especially when we are the Actors? To whom does it belong to judge? If ye meet with some Part, for ye can never prove it is all of the Demerit or deserved Punishment of your Sin here, will this conclude that ye shall be excec'm'd from *suffering* what further GOD may

in *Justice* think due to them and you on their Account hereafter? What Security have ye that ye shall escape with what is inflicted on you here? And not only so, but instead of meeting with what ye further deserve, obtain *Rewards* which ye dare scarce say ye deserve? If GOD spare at present a *noted Offender*, who cannot without Violence to Reason be suppos'd a Subject meet for *Pardon* or for a *Reward*, and reserve the whole Punishment due to his Crimes, to the other World; but in the mean while, sees meet to inflict *present Punishment* on thee, tho' less criminal, perhaps to convince the World, that even lesser Offenders shall not escape; if, I say, he deal thus, Is there no Way for clearing his *Justice*, but by collating *eternal Happiness* on thee? Why, If he inflict what further Punishment is due to thee, in exact Proportion to thy less atrocious Crimes; and punish the other with *Evils* proportion'd to his more atrocious Crimes, and make him up by the *Severity* of the Stroke for the *Delay* of the *Punishment*; if, I say, thus he do, I challenge any Man to tell me where the *Injustice* lies? And may not the like be said as to any other *vertuous Person*, or whom thou supposes such who meets with *Sufferings*?

Nor do less perplexing Difficulties attend those other Pleas for *future Happiness* to Man, at least, in his present Condition; which are drawn from GOD's creating us capable of *future Happiness*, implanting Desires, and giving us Gifts of it: All which would be given in vain, if there was no *Happiness* design'd for Man after Time.

But how by this we can be secur'd of *eternal Happiness*, I do not well see. Nor do I understand how the Difficulties which may be mov'd against *this*, can be resolv'd. It may be enquir'd, Whether *this Desire of Happiness*, said to be implanted in our Natures, is really any Thing distinct from that *natural Tendency* of the Creature, to its own Perfection and Preservation, which belongs to the *Being* of every Creature, with such Difference as to Degrees and the Manner, as their respective Natures require? If it is no more than this, it must be allow'd *essential* to every *rational Creature*: And if every *rational Creature* has an *essential Attribute*, which infers an Obligation on GOD to provide for it *eternal Happiness*, and put it in Possession of *this Felicity*, if no Fault intervene, doth it not thence necessarily follow, That GOD cannot possibly, without Injustice, turn to *Nothing* any *innocent rational Creature*; nay, nor create any one, which it's possible for him again to *annihilate* without *Injustice*? For if we should suppose it possible for GOD to do so, and thus without *Injustice* frustrate this Desire, where is the Force of the

the Argument? And it is not a little bold to limit GOD thus? I need not enter into the Debate, Whether there is any supposable Case, wherein *infinite Wisdom* may think it fit to do so? That Dispute is a little too nice: For on the one Hand, it will be hard for us to determine it positively, that *infinite Wisdom* must in any Case we can suppose, think it fit to destroy or turn to *Nothing* an *innocent Creature*; and on the other Hand, it is no less rash to assert, That our *not knowing* any Case, proves that really there is *none such known* to the only wise GOD. Besides, if we allow it only possible, in a Consistency with *Justice* and *Veracity* for GOD to do it, I am afraid the Argument has lost its Force. Further, it may be enquir'd, Whether the *rational Creature* can in Duty desire an *eternal Continuation* in *Being*, otherwise than with the *deepest Submission* to the *Sovereign Pleasure* of GOD, where he has given no *positive Promise*? If *Submission* belongs to it, all Certainty evanishes, and we must look elsewhere for *Assurance* of *eternal Happiness*. A Desire of it, if GOD see meet to give it, can never prove that certainly he will give it. If it is said, That the Creature without *Submission* or *Fault* may insist upon and claim *eternal Happiness*; I do not see how this can be proven.

But again, Do not *these Desires* respect the *whole Man* consisting of *Soul and Body*? Doth not *Death* dissolve the *Man*? Are not *these Desires* apparently frustrate? How will the *Light of Nature* certainly infer from *those Desires*, *Gifts*, &c. That the whole *Man* shall have *eternal Felicity*, while we see the *Man* daily destroy'd by *Death*? Can this be understood without *Revelation*? Does the *Light of Nature* teach us that there will be a *Resurrection*? I grant without the Supposal of a *future Existence*, we cannot easily understand what *End* there was worthy of GOD for making such a *noble Creature* as *Man*: But while we see *Man*, on the other Hand, daily destroy'd by *Death*, and know nothing of the *Resurrection of the Body*, which is the Case of all those who reject *Revelation*, we shall not know what to conclude, but must be toss'd in our own Minds, and be at a Loss how to reconcile those seeming Inconsistencies, which gave a great *Man* Occasion to observe, "That
 " *there can be no Reconciliation of the Doctrine of*
 " *future Rewards and Punishments, to be righte-*
 " *ously administred upon a Supposition of the sepa-*
 " *rate, everlasting Subsistence of the Soul only.*
 And for Proof of this, he insists on several weighty Considerations, which I cannot transcribe.

Dr. Owen on Heb.
 6. v. 1, 2. Vol. 3.
 Pag. 21..

But

But should we give up all this? will *this Desire of Happiness* prove that GOD design'd it for *Man*, whether he carried himself well or not? If it prove not that *sinful Man* may be *happy*, or that *eternal Happiness* is design'd for *Man*, who is now a *Sinner*, what are we the better for it? Are we not all in more or less guilty? What will it help us, that we were originally design'd for and made capable of *future Felicity*, if we are now under an Incapacity of obtaining it? Do we not find that we have fallen short of *perfect Obedience*? And can *those Desires* assure us that GOD will *pardon*, yea, *reward* us, and that with the *greatest Blessing* which *innocent Man* was capable of? Moreover, before we end this Discourse, I hope to make it appear, That by the *meer Light of Nature* no Man can assuredly know that *Sin shall be pardon'd*; and if so, it's vain to pretend, That we can be assur'd of *eternal Felicity* in our present Condition. They who have sinn'd less and suffer'd more in this Life, shall not be so severely punish'd in that which is to come, as they who have sinn'd more grievously and escap'd without Punishment here, this Reason assures us of: But it can scarce afford us so much as a colourable Plea for *eternal Rewards*, to any *Vertue* stain'd with the *least Sin*. The Scriptures make Mention of a *Happiness* promis'd to *innocent Man* upon *perfect Obedience*; and of *Salvation* to *guilty Man* upon *Faith in JESUS CHRIST*. Beside these Two I know no third Sort. As to the Last, the *Light of Nature* is entirely silent, as we shall see afterwards. Whether it can alone prove the First is a Question: But that *Man* in his present Condition cannot be the better for it, is out of Question.

6. Were it granted that these Arguments are concludent, yet the Matter would be very little mended: For it is certain, That these Arguments are too thin to be discern'd by the dim Eyes of the Generality, even tho' they had Tutors who would be at Pains to Instruct them. Yea, I fear that they rather beget Suspicions than firm Perswasions in the Minds of *Philosophers*. They are of that Sort, which rather silence than satisfy. Arguments *ab Absurdo* rather force the Mind to assent, than determine it chearfully to acquiesce in the *Truth* as discovered. Other Demonstrations carry alongst with them a Discovery of the Nature of the Thing, which satisfies it in some Measure. Hence they have a Force, not only to engage, but to keep the Soul steady in its Adherence to *Truth*; but these oblige to *implicite Belief* as it were, and therefore the Mind easily wavers and loses View of *Truth*; and is no longer firm, than it's forc'd to be so, by a present View of the

the Argument. If learn'd Men were always observant of their own Minds, and as ingenuous as the Auditor is in Cicero, in his Acknowledgment about the Force of Plato's Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, they would make some such Acknowledgment as he does. After he has told, That he has read oftner than once Plato's Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, which Cicero had recommended in the foregoing Discourse as the best that were to be expected, he adds, "*Sed nescio quomodo, dum lego assentior: cum posui Librum, & mecum ipse de Immortalitate Animorum cœpi cogitare, Assentio omnis illa elabatur.*" In like manner might others say, When I pore upon those Arguments, I assent: But when I begin to look on the Matter, I find there arises not such a *Light* from them, as is able to keep the Mind steady in its Assent. More especially will it be found so, if we look not only to the Matter, but to the Difficulties which offer about it. Yet this Steadiness is of absolute Necessity in this Case, since a Respect to this must be suppos'd always prevalent, in Order to influence to a steady Pursuit. The learn'd Sir Matt. Hale observes, That, "It is very true, that partly by an universal Tradition, deriv'd probably from the common Parent of Mankind, partly by some Glimmerings of natural Light in the natural Consciences, in some, at least, of the Heathen, there seem'd to be some common Perswasion of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. But first it was weak and dim, and was even in many of the wisest of them overborn; so that it was rather a Suspicion, or at most, a weak and faint Perswasion, than a strong and firm Conviction: And hence it became very unoperative and ineffectual to the most of them, when they had greatest need of it; namely, upon imminent or incumbent temporal Evils of great Pressure. But, where the Impression was firmest among them, yet still they were in the Dark what it was."

7 It is further to be considered, That it is not the general Perswasion that there is a *State of future Happiness and Misery* which can avail; but there must be a Discovery of *that Happiness* in its Nature, or wherein it consists; its Excellency and Suitableness to engage Man to look on it as his *chief Good*, pursue it as such, persevere in the Pursuit over all Opposition, and forego other Things, which he sees and knows the present Pleasure and Advantage of for it. Now such a View the *Light of Nature* can never rationally be pretended able to give: If it is, let the Pretender shew us where, and by whom such an Account has been

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given

given and verifi'd ; or let him do it himself. And if this is not done, as it never has, and I fear not to say, never can be done ; it would not mend the Matter, tho' we should forego all that has been above-said, as was above insinuated, which yet we see no Necessity of doing.

8. I might here tell how faintly the *Deists* use to speak upon this Head. Tho' upon Occasion, they can be *positive* ; yet at other Times they speak very modestly about the *Being* of a *future State of Happiness*, and tell us, " That Rewards and Punishment hereafter, tho' the No-

tion of them has not been universally receiv'd,
Orac. of Reas. P. 201. " the Heathens disagreeing about the Doctrine

" of the *Immortality* of the Soul, may yet be
 " granted to *seem reasonable*, because they are deduc'd from the Doctrine
 " of Providence——, and that they may be granted Parts of *natural*
 " *Religion*, because the wisest Men have inclin'd to hold them amongst
 " the Heathen, &c. and now do in all Opinions. And as they seem
 not over certain as to the *Being* of *future Rewards* and *Punishments*, so
 they plainly own they can give no Account what they are, " *Quæ*

De Veri. Pag. 57. " *vero, qualis, quanta &c. hæc Vita secunda vel*
 " *Mors fuerit ob Defectum Conditionum ad Veri-*
 " *tatis istius Conformationem postulatarum, sciri*
 " *nequit,* Says the learn'd *Herbert.*
Alibi sapius.

C H A P. VII.

Nature's Light affords not a sufficient Rule of Duty. Its Insufficiency hence inferr'd.

THere is certainly no other Way of attaining *Happiness*, than by pleasing GOD. *Happiness* is no other Way to be had, than from *him*, and no other Way can we reasonably expect it from *him*, but in the Way of *Duty* or *Obedience*. *Obedience* must either be with Respect to these Things which immediately regard the Honour of the Deity, or in other Things. The *Insufficiency of natural Religion as to Worship*, has been above demonstrate. That it is wanting as to the latter, viz. these Duties which we call'd for Distinction's Sake, *Duties of moral Obedience*, is now to be proven. That Man is subject to GOD, and so in every Thing oblig'd to regulate himself according to the Prescription of GOD, has been above asserted, and the Grounds of this Assertion have been more than insinuated. Now if *Nature's Light* is not able to afford a compleat Directory as to the Whole of Man's Conduct, in so far as the Deity is concern'd, it can never be allow'd sufficient to conduct Man in Religion and lead him to eternal Happiness: While it leaves him at a Loss as to sufficient Rules for universal Vertue, which even *Deists* own to be the principal Way of serving GOD and obtaining Happiness. It is one of the principal Things to which this is to be ascrib'd, and whereon Man's Hopes must reasonably be suppos'd to lean, if he is left to the meer Conduct of the *Light of Nature*. Now the *Insufficiency of Nature's Light* in this Point will be fully made appear, from the ensuing Considerations: Some of which are excellently discours'd by the ingenious Mr. Lock in his *Reasonableness of Christianity, as deliver'd in the Scripture*. If he had done as well in other Points as on this, he had deserv'd the Thanks of all that wish well to Christianity: But so far as he follows

Reasonableness of Christianity, P. 267.

the *Truth*, we shall take his Assistance, and improve some of his *No-*
tions, adding such others as are by him omitted, which may be judg'd
 of Use to the *Case in Hand*.

1. Then, we observe that no Man left to the Conduct meerly of
Nature's Light, has offer'd us a compleat *Body of Morality*. Some Parts

of our Duty are pretty fully taught by the *Philo-*
sophers and Politicians. " So much Vertue as was
 " necessary to hold Societies together; and to

" contribute to the Quiet of Governments; the civil Laws of Com-
 " mon-wealths taught, and forc'd upon Men that liv'd under Magi-
 " strates. But these Laws, being for the most Part made by such, who
 " had no other Aims, but their own Power, reach'd no further than
 " those Things that would serve to tie Men together in Subjection;
 " or at most, were directly to conduce to the Prosperity and temporal
 " Happiness of any People. But *natural Religion* in its full Extent,
 " was no where, that I know, taken Care of by the Force of *natural*
 " *Reason*. It should seem by the Little that hitherto has been done
 " in it, that it is too hard a Thing for *unassisted Reason*, to establish
 " *Morality* in all its Parts upon its true *Foundations*, with a clear and
 " convincing Light. Some Parts have been noticed, and others quite
 omitted. A compleat *Systeme of Morality* in its whole Extent has never
 been attempted by the *meer Light of Nature*, much less compleated.

2. To gather together the scattered Rules that are to be met with
 in the Writings of *Morality*, and wave these Shreads into a competent
Body of Morality, in so far as even the particular Direction of any one
 Man would require, is a Work of that immense Labour, and requires
 so much Learning, Study and Attention, that it has never been per-
 form'd, and never like to be perform'd, and quite surmounts the Capa-
 city of most, if not of any one Man. So that neither is there a compleat
Body of Morality given us by any one. Nor is it ever like to be col-
 lected from those who have give us Parcels of it.

3. Were all the moral Directions of the *ancient Sages* collected, it
 would not be a *Systeme* that would be any Way useful to the Body of
 Mankind. It would consist for most Part of enigmatical, dark and
 involv'd Sentences, that would need a Commentary too long for vul-
 gar Leasure to peruse, to make them intelligible. Any one that is in
 the least Measure acquaint with the *Writings* of the *Philosophers* will
 not question this. Of what Use would it be to read such *Morality* as
 that of *Pythagoras*, whose fam'd Sentences were, *Poak not in the Five*
 with

with a Sword; Stride not over the Beam of a Ballance;

Sit not upon a Bushel; Eat not the Heart; Take up

your Burthen with Help; Ease your self of it with

Assistance; Have always your Bed-clothes well tuck'd

up; Carry not the Image of GOD about you in a Ring, &c.

Was this like to be of any Use to Mankind? No sure, some of them indeed speaks more plain, some of them less so; but none of them sufficiently plain to be understood by the Vulgar.

Diog. Laert. *Life of Pythagoras.*

4. Further, were this Collection made, and, upon other Accounts, unexceptionable; yet it would not be sufficiently full to be an *universal Directory*. For, 1. Many important Duties would be wanting. *Self-denial*, that consists in a mean Opinion of our selves, and leads to a submitting, and passing from all our most valuable Concerns, when the Honour of GOD requires it, *is the fundamental Duty of all Religion*, that which is of absolute Necessity to a due Acknowledgment of Man's Subjection and Dependence; and yet we shall find a deep Silence in all the *Moralists* about it. Which Defect is the more considerable, that *the Whole of our Apostacy* is easily reducible to this one Point, *An Endeavour to subject the Will, Concerns and Pleasures of GOD to our own*. And no Act of Obedience to him, can, without gross Ignorance of his Nature, and Unacquaintedness with the Extent of his Knowledge, be presum'd acceptable, which flows not from such a Principle of *Self-denial*, as fixedly prefer the Concerns of GOD's Glory to all other Things. Again, what Duty have we more need of, than that which is employ'd in *forgiving Enemies*, nay in *loving them*? We have frequent Occasions for it. If we are not acquaint that this is Duty, we must frequently run into the opposite Sin. But where is this taught among the *Heathens*? Further, where shall we find a *Directory* as to the *inward Frame and Actings* of our Minds, guiding us how to regulate our Thoughts, our Designs? Some Notice is taken of the *outward Behaviour*; but little of that which is *the Spring* of it. Where is there a *Rule* for the Direction of our Thoughts, as to *Objects*, about which they should be employ'd, or as to the *Manner*, wherein they are to be conversant about them? These Things are of great Importance, and yet by very far out of the Ken of *uninlightned Nature*. Divine and spiritual Things were little known, and less thought of by *Philosophers*. 2. As this Systeme would be *defective* as to particular Duties of the highest Importance; so it would be quite *defective* as to the Grounds of those Duties which are enjoin'd. It is not enough to recommend Duty, that

that it is useful to us, or the Societies we live in. When we act only on such Grounds, we shew some Regard to our selves and the Societies whereof we are Members ; but none to GOD. Where are these clear'd to be the *Laws* of GOD? Who is he that presses *Obedience* upon the Consciences of Men, from the Consideration of GOD's *Authority* stamp't upon these *Laws* he prescribes? And yet without this, you may call it what you will : *Obedience* you cannot call it.

Reasonableness of Christianity, P. 278. It is well observed by Mr. *Lock*, " Those just Measures of *Right* and *Wrong*, which Necessity had any where introduc'd, the *Civil Laws* prescrib'd or *Philosophers* recommended, stood not on their true Foundations. They were look'd on as Bonds of Society, and Conveniencies of common Life, and laudable Practices: But where was it that their Obligation was throughly known, and allow'd, and they receiv'd as Precepts of a *Law*, of the highest *Law*, the *Law* of Nature? That could not be without the clear Knowledge of the *Law-giver*, and the great Rewards or Punishments for those that would not, or would obey. But the Religion of the Heathens, as was before observ'd, little concern'd it self in their Morals. The Priests that delivered the Oracles of Heaven and pretended to speak from the Gods, spoke little of *Vertue* and a good Life. And on the other Side, the Philosophers, who spoke from Reason, made not much Mention of the Deity in their *Ethicks*.

5. Not only would this Rule be defective and lame ; but it would be found corrupt and pernicious. For 1. Instead of leading them in the Way, it would in many Instances, lead them aside.

Epict. Enchirid. We should have here *Epictetus* binding you to Cap. 38. temporize and worship the Gods after the Fashion of

Diog. Laert. Vit. your Country. You should find *Pythagoras* forbidding Pyth. P. 7. you to pray for your self to GOD, because ye know not what is convenient. You should find *Aristotle*

and *Cicero* commending *Revenge* as a Duty. The latter you should find defending *Brutus* and *Cassius* for killing *Cesar*, and thereby authorizing the Murder of any *Magistrates*, if the Actors can but perswade themselves that they are *Tyrants*. Had we nothing to conduct us in our *Obedience* and *Loyalty*, but the Sentiments of *Philosophers*, no Prince could be secure either of his Life or Dignity. You should find *Cicero* pleading for *Self-murder*, from which he can never be freed, nor can any tolerable Apology be made for him. Herein he was seconded

seconded by *Brutus*, *Cato*, *Cassius*, *Seneca* and others innumerable. Many of them practis'd it, others applauded of their Sentiments in this Matter. You may find a large Account in Mr. *Dodwel's Apology for the Philosophical Performances of Cicero* prefix'd to Mr. *Parker's Translation of his Book de Finibus*. And you may find the *Deists* justifying this in the Preface to the *Oracles of Reason*, wherein *Blount's* killing of himself is justify'd. Of the same Mind was

Seneca, who expressly advises the Practice of it.

Seneca de Ira,
Lib. 3. Cap. 15.

We should here find customary Swearing commended, if not by their Precepts, yet by the Examples of

the best Moralists, *Plato*, *Socrates* and *Seneca*. In whom numerous Instances of Oaths by *Jupiter*, *Hercules* and by *Beasts* do occur. In the

the same Way we should find unnatural Lust recommended. *Aristotle* practis'd it. And *Socrates*

Diog. Laert. Vita
Arist. Lib. 5. P. 323.

is fully bely'd, if he lov'd not the same Vice.

Whence else could *Socratici Cinædi* come to be a

Proverb in *Juvenal's* Days, *Pride* and *Self-esteem* were among their Vertues. Which gives me Occasion to observe, That this one Thing

overturn'd their whole Morality. *Epictetus*, one of the best of all their Moralists, tells us, "That

Epict. Ench. Cap. 27.

"the Constitution and Image of a Philosopher is

"to expect Good, as well as fear Evil only from himself. *Seneca* urgeth

this every where, "*Sapiens tam æquo Animo*

"omnia apud alios videt, contemnitque, quam

"*Jupiter: Et hoc se magis suspicit, quod Jupiter*

"uti illis non potest, sapiens non vult. And again,

"*Est aliquid quo Sapiens antecedit Deum. Ille*

"*Naturæ Beneficio, non suo, Sapiens est. Incomptus*

"*Vir sit externis & insuperabilis, Miratorque tantum sui.*

"*Self-esteem* was a Disease epidemical amongst them, and seems

"wholly incurable by any Notions they had. Some arriv'd to that

"Impudence to compare themselves with, nay, prefer themselves be-

"fore their own Gods. It was either a horrible Folly to deifie what

"they postpon'd to their own Self-estimation, or

"else it was a stupendious Effect of their Pride

"to prefer themselves to the Gods they wor-

"shipped. Never any Man amongst them

"proposed the Honour of their Gods as the chief

"End of their Actions, nor so much as dream'd

Senec. Epist. 73.
Epist. 53.
Id. de vita Beata,
Cap. 8.

Sir Ch. Wolfeley
Reasonableness of
Scripture Belief,
P. 118.

" of

" of any such Thing ; 'is evident the best of them in their best Actions
 " reflected still back to themselves, and determinated there, designing
 " to set up a Pillar to their own Fame. That known Sentence of
 Cicero, who speaks plain out what others thought, will justify this severe
 Censure given by this worthy Person; *Vult plane*

Cicero de Amicitia. *Virtus Honorem: Nec Virtutis ulla alia Merces.*
 Were it needful, I might write Volumes to this
 Purpose, that would make one's Flesh tremble to read. They who
 desire Satisfaction in this Point, may find it largely done by others.
 I shall conclude this first Evidence of the Corruption of their Morality

See Instances to this
 Purpose in a Discourse
 of moral Vertue, and
 its Difference from
 Grace, P. 225.

with this general Reflection of the learn'd Amy-
 rald in his Treatise of Religions ; " Scarce can
 " there be found any Common-wealth amongst
 " those, which have been esteem'd the best go-
 " vern'd, in which some grand and signal Vice
 " has not been excus'd, or permitted, or even
 sometimes recommended by publick Laws.

2. Not only did they injoin *wrong Things* ; but they injoin'd what
 was *right* to a *wrong End*, yea even their best Things, as we heard but
 now, aim'd at their own Honour. We have heard Cicero to this Pur-
 pose telling plainly that *Honour was their Aim*. Or what the Poet
 said of Brutus killing his own Sons when they intended the overthrow
 of the Liberty of their Country,

Vicit Amor Patriæ Laudumque immensa Cupido,

is the most that can be pleaded for most of them. Others are plainly
 blasphemous as we have heard from Seneca, designing to be *above*
 GOD by his *Vertue*. At this Rate this Philosopher

Seneca, Epist. 48. talks very oft : *Let Philosophy, says he, minister*
this to me, that it render me equal to GOD. To

the Maintenance of this, their Notions about the Soul of Man con-
 tributed much ; styling it a Piece clipt from GOD *Ἀνιστάσμα τῷ Θεῷ*,
 or a Part of GOD *τῷ Διὶς Μῆρος*, as Epictetus speaks. Horace calls it
Divina Particula Auræ. Cicero in his *Somnium Scip.* tells us what they
 thought of themselves, *Deum scito te esse, know thy self to be a God.*
 And accordingly the Indian Brachmans vouch'd themselves for Gods.
 And indeed they, who debas'd their Gods below Men, by their abomi-
 nable Characters of them, it was no Wonder to find them prefer
 themselves to them. Nor did any run higher this Way than Plato.

Let

Let any one read his Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, and if they prove any Thing, they prove it a *God*. Thus they quite corrupted all they taught, by directing it to wrong Ends. 3. *This Systeme* would corrupt us as to the *Fountain of Vertue* and its *Principle*, teaching us to trust our selves, and not depend on *GOD* for it. We have heard some speak to this Purpose already; and *Cicero* may well be allow'd to speak for the rest. "*A Deo tantum Rationem*

"*habemus: Bonam autem Rationem, aut non* Cicero de Natura
"*bonam a nobis.* And a little after, near the *Deorum*, Lib. 3. P.
close of his Book, after he has own'd our external *mibi*, 173.

Advantages of Learning to *GOD*, he subjoins,

"*Virtutem autem Nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, nimirum recte:*
"*Propter Virtutem enim Jure laudamur, & in Virtute recte gloriamur,*
"*quod non contingeret, si id Donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus.* Thus we see how corrupt they were in this Point, and it is here easily observable whence they were corrupted as to their *chief End*. He that believes he has any Thing that is not from *GOD*, will have somewhat also that he will not refer to him, as his *chief End*. 4. The Corruption of *this Systeme*, would in this appear, that it would be full of *Contradictions*. Here we shall find nothing but endless Jarrs; one condemning as abominable, what another approves and praises: Whereby we should be led very often to judge neither right, rather than any of them. A Man, who for Direction, will betake himself to the Declarations of the *Philosophers*, goes into a wild Wood of Uncertainty, and to an endless Maze, from which he should never get out. Plenty of Instances, confirming these two last mentioned Observations, might be adduc'd. If the Reader desire them, I shall refer him to Mr. *Lock's Essay of Humane Understanding*, Book 1. Chap. 3. Parag. 9. where he may see it has been customary with Nations not a few to expose their Children, bury them alive without Scruple, fatten them for the Slaughter, kill them and eat them, and dispatch their aged Parents: Yea some, he will find, have been so absurd, as to expect *Paradise* as a *Reward of Revenge*, and of eating *Abundance of their Enemies*. Whether these Instances will answer Mr. *Lock's Purpose*, I dispute not now. I design not to make my self a Party in that Controversy. But I am sure such *fatal Mistakes*, as to what is *Good and Evil*, are a pregnant Evidence of the *Insufficiency of Nature's Light* to afford us a *complete Rule of Duty*. If they, who were left to it, blundered so shamefully in the clearest Cases, how shall we expect Direction, as to these that are far more intricate?

6. Be *this Systeme* never so compleat, yet it can never be allow'd to be a *Rule of Life* to Mankind. This I cannot better satisfie my self upon, than by transcribing what the ingenious Mr. *Lock* has excellently discours'd on this Head. " I will suppose there was a *Stobæus* in those
 " Times, who had gathered the *moral Sayings* from all the *Sages* of
 " the World. What would this amount to, towards being a *steady Rule*,
 " a certain *Transcript* of a *Law*, that we are under? Did the *Saying*
 " of *Aristippus*, or *Confutius*, give it *Authority*? Was *Zeno* a *Law-*
 " giver to Mankind? If not, what he or any other *Philosopher* de-
 " livered, was but a *Saying* of his. Mankind might hearken to it or
 " reject it as they pleas'd, or as it suited their *Interest*, *Passions*,
 " *Principles* or *Humours*. They were under no *Obligation*: The
 " Opinion of this or that *Philosopher*, was of no *Authority*. And if it
 " were, you must take all he said, under the same *Character*. All his
 " Dictates must go for *Law*, certain and true; or none of them. And
 " then, if you will take the *moral Sayings* of *Epicurus* (many whereof
 " *Seneca* quotes with *Approbation*) for *Precepts* of the *Law of Na-*
 " *ture*, you must take all the rest of his *Doctrine* for such too, or
 " else his *Authority* ceases: So no more is to be received from him,
 " or any of the *Sages* of old, for *Parts* of the *Law of Nature*, as carrying
 " with them an *Obligation* to be obey'd, but what they prove to be
 " so. But such a *Body of Ethicks*, prov'd to be the *Law of Nature*,
 " from *Principles* or *Reason*, and reaching all the *Duties of Life*; I
 " think no *Body* will say the *World* had before our *Saviour's Time*.
 " And I may add, nor to this Day has by the *meer Light of Nature*. 'Tis
 " not enough, continues he, that there were up and down scattered
 " *Sayings* of wise Men, conformable to right *Reason*. The *Law*
 " of *Nature* was the *Law of Conveniency* too: And it is no Wonder
 " these Men of *Parts*, and studious of *Vertue*, (who had *Occasion* to
 " think of any particular *Part* of it) should, by *Mediation*, light on
 " the *Right*, even from the observable *Conveniency* and *Beauty* of it,
 " without making out its *Obligation* from the true *Principles* of the
 " *Law of Nature*, and *Foundations of Morality*. More he adds judiciously
 " to this Purpose; but this is enough. And hence it is plain, That
 " such a *Systeme of Morality* would, if collected, at best be only a *Col-*
 " *lection* of *Problems*, which every Man is left at *Liberty* to canvass,
 " dispute, or reject; nay more, which every Man is oblig'd to examine
 " as to all its *Parts*, in so far as it prescribes *Rules* to him, and not to
 " receive, but upon a *Discovery* of its *Truth* from its proper *Principles*.

7. It is then plain that every Man is left to his own Reason to find out his Duty by. He is not to receive it upon any other Authority, than that of Reason, if Revelation is rejected. He must find out therefore, in every Case, what he is to do, and deduce its Obligation from the Principles of the Law of Nature. But who sees not, that the most Part of Men have neither Leisure nor Capacity for such a Work? Men may think Duty easy to be discovered now, when Christianity has clear'd it up. But Mr. Lock well observes, "That the first Knowledge of those Truths, which have been discovered by Christian Philosophers, or Philosophers since Christianity prevails, are owing to Revelation; tho' as soon as they are heard and consider'd, they are found to be agreeable to Reason; and such as can by no Means be contradicted. Every one may observe a great many Truths which he receives, at first, from others, and readily assents to, as consonant to Reason, which he would have found it hard, and perhaps beyond his Strength to have discovered himself. Native and original Truth, is not so easily wrought out of the Mine, as we who have it delivered, ready dug and fashion'd into our Hands, are apt to imagine. And how often at Fifty and Threescore Years old are thinking Men told, what they wonder how they could miss thinking of? which yet their own Contemplations did not, and possibly, never would have helped them to. Experience shews that the Knowledge of Morality, by meer natural Light (how agreeable soever it be to it) makes but a slow Progress and little Advance in the World: Whatever was the Cause, 'tis plain in Fact that humane Reason, unassisted, fail'd Men in its great and proper Business of Morality.

8. As it is unquestionably certain, That the most Part of Mankind are not able, by their own Reason to frame a compleat Body of Morality for themselves, or find out what is their own Duty, in every particular Instance (I shall not speak of any Man's being oblig'd to discover what belongs to other Peoples Duty, lest our Antagonists should suspect I design'd to open a Door for Priests, a Sett of Men and an Office which they mortally hate) I speak only of what is every one's Duty in particular. And I say it is evident the most Part of Mankind are unable to find this, which is not to be done, but by such Strains of Reasoning and Connexion of Consequences, which they have neither Leisure to weigh, nor, for Want of Capacity, Education and Use, Skill to judge of; and as I say, they are unable for this; so I fear this Task will be found too hard for the ablest Philosophers. Particular

Duties are so many, and many of them so remote from the *first Principles*, and the Connexion is so subtile and fine spun, that I fear, not to say it must, escape the piercing Eyes of the most *acute Philosophers*: And if they engage in Pursuit of the Discovery, through so many and so subtile Consequences, they must either quit the unequal Chace, or lose themselves instead of finding *Truth* and *Duty*. And if we allow our selves to judge of what shall be, by what has been the Success of such Attempts, I am sure this is more than bare Guess.

9. It is further to be observed that no tolerable Progress could be made herein, were it to be done, before advanc'd Years. But its certain that Youth as well as riper Age is under the *Law of Nature*, and that Age needs clear Discoveries of *Duty* the more, that in it irregular Passions and Inclinations are more vigorous, and it is expos'd to more Temptations than any other Part of a Man's Life; and besides, wants the Advantages of *Experience*, to fortifie it against the dangerous Influence of them, which advanced Years are attended with. Now it will be to no Purpose to me to find out some Years hence, what was my Duty before, as to *Obedience*; for now the Season is over. The *Law* may discover my *Sin*, but can never regulate my *Practice*, in a Period of my Life that is past and gone. Every Man must have the Knowledge of each Day's Duty in its Season. This is not to be had from the *Light of Nature*. If we are left at a Loss in our younger Years, as *Nature's Light* will have us, we may be ruin'd before Knowledge come. Much Sin must be contracted. Ill Habits are like to be very much strength'ned, before any Stop come: Yea, they may be so strong, that the Foundation of inevitable Ruin may be laid.

Finally, *Knowledge* is requisite before acting, at least, in Order of Nature it is so; and must, at least, in Order of Time be Contemporary. Action gives not always Time for long reasoning and weighing such Trains of Consequences, as are requisite to clear Duties from the *first Principles* of *Nature's Light*, and enforce their Obligation. And therefore Man left to it, is in a miserable Plight, not much unlike to the Case of the Romans, *Dum deliberant Romani capitur Saguntum*: While he is searching for Duty, the Season is lost; and the Discovery, if it comes, arrives too late to be of any Use.

It is in vain for any to pretend, That the *Knowledge of Duty* is connate to the *Mind of Man*. Whatever may be pretended as to a few of the *first Principles of Morality*, and its but a very few of which this can be alledg'd, yet it is certain, it can never be without Impudence extended

extended to the thousand Part of the Duties we are bound to in particular Cases. General Rules may be easy; particular ones are the Difficulty, and the Application of Generals to circumstantiate Cases, is a hard Task. It is but with an ill Grace pretended, that *these Duties* are *Self-evident*, and the Knowledge of them *innate* or *connate*, call it what you please, to the Mind of Man; which the World has never been agreed about; which wise Men, when the fairest Occasions offer'd of thinking on them, could not discern, which *Philosophers*, upon Application and Attention, cannot make out from the *Principles of Reason*. The Reason why the Knowledge of any Truth is said to be *Innate*, is, because, either the Mind of Man is struck with the Evidence in its first Proposal, and must yield Assent, without seeking Help from any Principles of a clearer Evidence; or, because its Dependence on *such Principles* is so obvious, that the Conclusion is so plainly connected with such Principles, that its never sooner spoke of, than its Connexion with them, and so its Truth, appears. Of the *first Sort* few Duties can be said to be. And if they were of the *last Sort*, any Person of a tolerable Capacity would be able to demonstrate them upon Attention. Now how far it is otherwise in this Case, who sees not?

Upon the Whole I must conclude, That *Nature's Light* is not sufficient to give us *such a Law* or *Rule* as may be a *sure Guide* of those who desire to go right, so that they need not lose their Way, or mistake their Duty, if they have a Mind to know it, nor be uncertain whether they have done it.

It will not relieve the *Deists* to pretend, That some of the *Exceptions* above mention'd, may be retorted upon *Christians*, and improv'd against the *Scriptures*: For Nothing but *Ignorance* of the true State of the Question can give Countenance to this Pretence. The *Scriptures* are a *Rule* provided by *Sovereign Grace* for *fallen Man*, and by *Infinite Wisdom* are adjust'd to *GOD's great Design* of *recovering Man* to the Praise of his *own Grace*, in such a Way as may *stain the Pride* of all *Glory*. They are *sufficient* as an *outward Mean*, and do effectually conduct Man to that *Happiness* design'd for him, under the Influence of the *assisting Grace* provided for him, and in the Use of the Means of *GOD's Appointment*. They provide a *Relief* against any *unavoidable Defects* in his *Obedience*, and direct to the *proper Grounds* of his *Acceptance* in it: But Men, who pretend *Nature's Light* is able to guide to *Happiness*, are oblig'd to instruct that it affords us a *Rule of Duty*; which of it self, without the Help of any *supernatural Assistance*, either as to *outward Means*

Means or *inward Influences*, may be able to lead Man to the *Obedience* requir'd; and *this Obedience* must be such, as answers our *original Obligation*, and upon Account of its own *Worth*, is able to support, not only a *Hope of Acceptance*, but of *future, nay eternal Rewards*. For such as are left to *Nature's Light*, can neither pretend to any such *outward Means*, nor *inward Assistance*, nor any such *Relief* against Defects in *Knowledge* or *Practice*, as the *Scriptures* do furnish us with. *Nature's Light* lays no other Foundation for *Hopes of Acceptance* or *Reward* save only the *Worth* or *Perfection* of the *Obedience it self*. And this, if it is duly considered, not only repels the pretended Retortion, but gives additional Force to the foregoing Argument.

C H A P. VIII.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion from its Defects as to sufficient Motives for enforcing Obedience.

IT is warmly disputed in the Schools, Whether *Rewards* and *Punishments* be not so much of the *Essence* of a *Law*, and so included in its Notion, that Nothing can properly be stil'd *Law* which wants them? I design not to make my self a Party in those Disputes. But this much is certain, That *Laws* and *Government* are *Relatives*; they mutually infer and remove each other. There is no *Government* properly so call'd, that wants *Laws*, or somewhat that is the Measure and Standard of its Administration. And there are no *Laws* where there is no *Authority* and *Government* to enjoin them. Whence this plainly results, That *Obedience*, if it does no more, yet it certainly intitles to the *Protection* of the *Government*. And *Disobedience*, not only denudes of any Title to that, but lays open to such further Severities, as the *Government* shall have Power to execute and see meet to use for its own Preservation, against Violators of its Constitutions. But further, to wave this Dispute quite, the Nature of Man which proceeds not to Action save upon Knowledge, makes this much certain, That whatever he may be suppos'd oblig'd to in strict Duty, yet really in Fact, he

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uses to pay any great Regard to *Laws* which are not enforc'd by *Motives* or *Inducements*, that may be suppos'd to work with him, as containing *Discoveries* of such *Advantages* attending *Obedience*, and *Disadvantages* following *Disobedience*, as may powerfully sway him to consult his *Duty* as well as *Interest*, by yielding *Obedience*. If then *natural Religion* is found unable to discover those Things which ordinarily prevail with Man to obey, and carry him over any Obstructions which lie in the Way, it can never be suppos'd sufficient to lead Man to *Happiness*: For Man is not to be driven but led; he is not to be led blindfolded, but upon rational Views of *Duty* and *Interest*. That *natural Religion* is in this Respect exceedingly *Defective*, is the Design of this Discourse to demonstrate. All those *Motives*, which usually have any Influences, may, I think, be brought under the following Heads. 1. *A full View of the Authority of the Lawgiver and his Laws.* And 2. *A Prospect of present Benefit by Obedience.* 3. *A Prospect of future Rewards for it.* 4. *Fear of Punishment in Case of Disobedience.* And 5. *Examples.* Now, as I know no Motive which may not easily without Stretch be resolved into one of those, so, if I make it appear that *Nature's Light* is lame as to each of them, I think I have gone a great Way to disprove its *Sufficiency* to *Happiness*. Well, let us essay it.

1. The great Inducement to *Obedience* is a clear *Discovery* of the *Authority of the Lawgiver, and Laws* thence resulting. This is not perhaps, properly speaking, a *Motive*, as it is oft used: For in very Deed this is the *formal Reason* of *Obedience*: A Regard whereto gives any Action the Denomination of *Obedience*, and entitles to the *Law's Protection*, and other *Advantages*; yet certain it is, that this should have the principal Influence, from the Ground just now laid down, and therefore we shall here speak of it. It will prevail far with Man to obey the *Law of Nature*, if *Nature's Light* clearly discover how much the *Lawgiver* deserves that Place; how well he is qualify'd for it; how indisputable his Title to the Government is; and how far he has interposed his Authority, that the Stamp of it is on these *Laws*, to which we are urg'd to be subject, that they bear a plain Congruity to his sublime Qualifications, that he is concern'd to have them obey'd, observes the Intertainment they meet with, entertains a Respect for the *Obedient*, and resents *Disobedience*. If we are left in the Dark, as to all or most of these, it will exceedingly weaken our Regard to the *Law*. And that this is plainly the Case, is now to be made appear. 1. It goes a great Way toward the *Recommendation* of any *Law* to be fully satisfied

tisfy'd as to the Qualifications of the Framers. But how dark is *Nature's Light* here? It discovers indeed his *Power* and *Greatness*: But its Notions of his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Clemency* and *Goodness*, are exceedingly darkned, by the seemingly unequal Distributions of Things here below, the innumerable Miseries, under which the World groans, and other Things of a like Nature; that truly very few, if left meerly to its Conduct, would reach any such Discoveries of those glorious Properties, as would influence any considerable Regard to those Laws he is suppos'd to make.

I dispute not now what may be strictly known and demonstrate of GOD, by a Train of subtle Arguments. For I would not be understood so much as to insinuate the Want of *objective Evidences* of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the Deity. Our Question respects not so much these, as *Man's Power* of discerning them. It is not absolutely deny'd, that there are many and pregnant Evidences of these *Attributes* in the *Works* of *Creation* and *Providence*; our Question is only, Whether there is such Evidence of those Perfections, especially in GOD's *moral Government* of the World, every where appearing, as may be able effectually to influence the Practice, and affect the Mind of Man in his present State, notwithstanding of any Obstructions arising, either from the *inward Weakness* of his *Faculties*, or the *Works* of GOD from without, which to the darkned Mind of Man may have a contrary Appearance? And that which I contend is, That such is the State of Things, so they go in the World, and so blind are Mens Eyes, that there is not so near and clear Evidence of these Things, in what is discernible by the most of Men, as may strike strongly, affect powerfully, and have a lively Influence to quicken to practise. If our Governour is near, if he is daily conversant with us, if we have daily indisputed Evidences of his *Goodness*, *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Clemency*, and other Qualifications fitting for Government, without any *Actions* that may seem to be capable of a *contrary Construction*, or even of a *dubious* one, this inforces a Regard to his Commands. On the contrary, if he is little known, if his Way of Management is hid from us, if there are Instances, which however possibly they may be just, yet have a contrary Appearance to us, this weakens Regard and confounds quite. And this is plainly the Case as to GOD with Men left to the *meer Conduct* of *Nature's Light*, not through any Defect on GOD's Part, but through the Darkness of the Mind of Man in his present State; and this is the more considerable, that we use to be more sensible of what Evil any is suppos'd

pos'd to do us, than of what *Good* we receive from them. Now since this Observation is of Use to prevent Mistakes, I desire it may be carry'd along through the rest of our Remarks. 2. It works powerfully, and strongly excites to Obedience, if the Indisputableness of the *Lawgiver's* Title, and the Grounds whereon it leans are clearly known. Now as to GOD, the Grounds of his Title to the *Legislative* as well as *Executive Power*, are the *supereminent Excellency of his Nature*, rendring him not only fit, but the *only fit Person* for it; *his Creation of all Things*, and thence resulting, *Propriety in them* as his Creatures, such as his *Preservation* of them in *Being*, his *Providential Care and Inspection*, and the *many Benefits* he bestows on them. But we have heard already, how dim the Discoveries of GOD's *supereminent Excellencies* are, which the *Light of Nature* affords. As to his *Creation*, it was disputed among the *Learn'd* and quite overlook'd by the *Vulgar*, amongst those who were left to *Nature's Light*, as Baron Herbert well observes and clears. As to his *close Influence* in their *Preservation*, it could not be noticed or known, where the other was overlook'd. His *providential Care and Inspection*, which perhaps, as to its *Power of Influencing*, would go the greatest Length, if it can be proven by the *Light of Nature*; yet cannot certainly by it be explain'd, and truly is so darkned by many obvious Occurrences in the external Administration of the World, that past all peradventure, it can never suitably affect Men, who have no other Discoveries of it, than the *Light of Nature* affords. As to GOD's *Benefits*, tho' they are many, yet they did not affect so much, because they were convey'd by the Intervention of such second Causes as did arrest, instead of helping forward the short sighted Minds of Men, and detain'd them in Contemplation of the Servant who brought the Favour, whereas they should have look'd further, to him who sent it; so they should have done, but so they did not. Again, some of their most *valuable Benefits*, their *Vertues*, they deny'd GOD to be the Author of, as we have heard above from *Seneca*, *Cicero* and *Epictetus*. And finally, some of them were inclinable to think, That the *Benefits* were more than countervail'd by the *Evils* we labour under. Thus were the Minds of Men darkned, and so they had continued, if we had been without *Revelation*. 3. It is of much Force to influence *Obedience*, if we have a clear and satisfying Discovery of his Concernment in those *Laws*; that is, that he who is thus qualify'd for, and rightfully possess'd of the Government, has made such Laws, and stamp'd his Authority on them. However great *Ideas* we have of his *Excellency* and *Title* to give *Laws*; yet this will

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have no Weight, if we are not clearly satisfy'd that these are *his Laws*. Now how palpably defective *Nature's Light* is here, has been fully made out in the *last Chapter*. 4. It will have no small Force, if we had a clear Knowledge, That *these Laws* are in their Matter fully congruous to the Qualifications we desire in a Lawgiver, such as *Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Clemency*, and the like. But as these Attributes are either not known or darkly known by the *Light of Nature*; so the Impress of them on the *Laws of Nature* has not been discovered, nor is it discoverable: For I doubt not but it might easily be made appear, That the whole Frame of the *Laws of Nature* are adapted to the Nature of Man as *Innocent*, and indued with sufficient Power to continue so, which is not the Case with him now. And therefore how to reconcile *these Laws* to the Notions of GOD and Man is a Speculation, as of the last Consequence, so of the greatest Difficulty, which had never been got through, if GOD had not vouchsaf'd us *another Guide* than *Nature's Light*. 5. If the *Lawgiver* is certainly known to have a great Regard to his *Laws*, and to take careful Inspection of the Observation of them; this will be strong Inducement to regard them. But here *Nature's Light* is no less dark, than as to the rest. The whole Face of Things in the World seem to have so contrary an Aspect, that we could never see clearly through this Matter, if without *Revelation* we were left to judge of GOD by the *meer Light of Nature*. The abounding of Sin, Prosperity of Sinners, Sufferings of the Best and the like, led some to deny quite GOD's *Providence* and *Government*; others of the better Sort doubted of it, as *Claudian* elegantly represents his own Case, *Lib. 1. contra Rufinum*;

*Sæpe mihi dubiam traxit Sententia Mentem,
Curarent Superi Terras, an ullus inesset
Rector, & incerto fluereut mortalia Casu.
Nam cum dispositi quæsissem Fædera Mundi,
Præscriptosque Mari Fines, Annisque Meatus,
Et Lucis, Noctisque Vices: Tunc omnia rebar
Consilio firmata Dei———
Sed cum Res Hominum tanta Caligine volvi
Adspicerem, lætosque diu florere Nocentes,
Vexarique Pios: Rursus labefacta cadebat
Religio. Caussæque Viam non sponte sequebar
Alterius, vacuo quæ currere Semina Motu:*

Affirmat:

*Affirmat magnumque novas per inane Figuras
Fortuna, non Arte, Regi: Quæ Numina Sensu
Ambiguo vel nulla putat, vel nescia nostri.*

I know that *Claudian* got over this by *Rufinus* his Death, but such Providences have not always the like Issue, and I only adduce his Words as a lively Representation of the Strait. Yea, to so great a Height came these Doubts, that it's to be fear'd many were carry'd to the worst Side. 'Tis certain the best of them were so confounded with those Occurrences, that they could not spare Reflections full of Blasphemy upon *Providence*. The fam'd *Cato's* last Words may scarce be excus'd from this Crime. Finally, it's certain, That there was so much Darkness about this Matter, that none of them all pay'd a due Regard to GOD.

I shall now leave *this Head*, after I have observ'd one or two Things, and the *First* of them is, That however some of these Truths above-mention'd may possibly be made out by a Train of subtile Arguments; yet such Arguments however they may draw an Assent from a thinking Man, not only transcend the Capacity of the Vulgar, but fail of exciting and affecting even the most Philosophical Heads. For to draw forth our active Powers into Action, the Inducements must shine with a Light, that may warm the Mind as it were, not only dissipating Doubts about the Reality of what is observed, but also shewing its *Excellency*. Upon this Occasion I may not imper-
tinentlly apply to the *Philosophers*, what *Plautus* says of *Comic Poets*,
Le Clerk *Parrhosi-
na*, Page 52.

*Spectavi ego pridem Comicos ad istum Modum
Sapienter Dicta dicere, atque illis plaudier,
Cum illos Sapientes Mores monstrabant Populo;
Sed cum inde suam quisque ibant diversi Domum,
Nullus erat illo Pacto, ut illi jusserunt.*

“ I have often seen, that after the Comic Poets have said good
 “ Things, and that they have been applauded for them, while they
 “ taught good Manners to the People, as soon as they were got Home,
 “ no Body was the better for their Advice. The other Thing I ob-
 serve, is, That any Defect as to the Knowledge of the *Lawgiver* is so
 much the more considerable, than any other, that a Regard to the
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Lawgiver is that which gives the *Formality* of Obedience to any Action, and therefore the less Knowledge there is of him, the less of Obedience, properly so called, there will be. Thus far we have clear'd how little *Nature's Light* can do for enforcing *Obedience* from the Discoveries it makes of the *Lawgiver*.

II. A second Head of Motives to Duty is *present Advantage*. Now if *Nature's Light* is able to prove, That *Obedience* to the *Law of Nature* is like to turn to our *present Advantage*, either as to *Profit* or *Pleasure*, this would be of Weight: But it is needless to insist on this Head; for who sees not, that there is but little to be said as to many Duties here? Are they not cross to present Inclinations? And for any Thing *Nature's Light* can discover, diametrically opposite to our *present Interest* and *Honour*; I mean according to the Notions generally entertain'd of those Things in the World? So it is but little that it can say upon this Head. How often are we so stat'd, that in Appearance Nothing stands in our Way to *Pleasure*, *Honour* or *Profit*, but only the *Command*? It were easy to enlarge on this Head; but since it will not be readily controverted, I wave it. And indeed it were of no Consideration, if *present Losses* were otherwise compensate by *future Advantages*.

III. If *Nature's Light* can give a full View of *future Rewards*, then this will compensate *present Disadvantages*, and be a strong Inducement to *Obedience*. But the Discovery, if it is of any Use, must be clear and lively, that it may affect and excite, as has been above observ'd. Well, what can *Nature's Light* do here? Very little, as has been above fully demonstrate, when we discours'd of the *chief End*. It remains only now that we observe that *Evils* and *Disadvantages* discouraging from Duty are *present*, *sensible*, *great*, and so affect strongly: Wherefore if *future Rewards* have not somewhat to ballance these, they cannot have much Influence. Now it has been made sufficiently evident, That all which *Nature's Light* has to put in the Ballance, to encourage the Mind to go on in Duty, against *present*, *sensible*, *certain* and *great Discouragements*, is at most, but a *dark*, *conjectural* Discovery of *Rewards*, or rather *Suspicion* about them after Time, without telling us what they are, or wherein they do consist. Will this ever prevail with Men to obey? No, it cannot. The *Prospect* of *future Rewards* was not that which prevail'd with the most *moral* amongst the *Heathens* of old. Their Knowledge of these Things, if they had any, was of little or no Use or Influence to them, as to their *Excitement* to *Virtue*.

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IV. *Nature's Light* is no less defective as to the *Discovery of Punishments*: For however the *Forebodings* of guilty Consciences, a dark Tradition handed down from Generation to Generation, and some *exemplary Instances* of divine Severity, have kept some Impressions of *Punishment* on the Minds of many in all Ages; yet it is well known, that those Things were ridicul'd by most of the *Philosophers*, the *Poets Fictions* made them contemptible, and the daily Instances of *Impunity* of Sinners here weakned the Impressions. Besides, *Evils* that follow Duty, and *Losses* sustain'd, are *sensible, present, certain, known*, and so affect strongly, and therefore are not to be ballanced by *Punishments*, which are not, or rather, at least, are rarely executed in Time, and where of there is little distinct Evidence after Time. For be it granted that the *Justice* and *Holiness* of GOD render it incredible that so many Transgressors as escape unpunished here, should get off so; yet certain it is, That *Nature's Light* can no Way inform what *Punishments* shall be inflicted.

V. *Nature's Light* can never point us to *Examples* which may have any Influence. There are but few of those who wanted *Revelation*, even of the *Philosophers*, who were not tainted with gross Vices. We have strange Stories told of a *Socrates*; and yet after all, he was but a sorry Example of *Vertue*. He is frequently by *Plato* introduc'd *Swearing*. He is known to have basely comply'd with the *Way of Warship* follow'd by his Country, which was the more impious, that it is to be suppos'd to be against the Perswasion of his Conscience; yea we find him with his last Breath, ordering his Friend to sacrifice the Cock he had vow'd to *Esculpius*. *M. Dacier's* Apology for him is perfectly impertinent. He is accus'd of *impure Amours* with *Alcibiades*, and of prostituting his Wife's Chastity for Gain. It is evident that in the Whole of his Conduct, he shews but little Regard to GOD. Such are the *Examples* we are to expect here. We might give full as bad Account of the fam'd *Seneca*, were it necessary to insist on this Head, not to mention others of less Consideration.

Now to conclude, how shall we by *Nature's Light* be prevail'd on to obey, while it gives so unsatisfying Discoveries of the Law and Lawgiver? Can shew so little of present or future Advantage by Obedience, or Disadvantage by Disobedience? Nor can it offer any *Examples* that are worth following.

'Tis certain that the Experience of the World justifies this Account. What means it, that Instances of any Thing like *Vertue* are so rare, where

where *Revelation* obtains not? Sure it must say on of Two, if not both; that either *Nature's Light* presents no *Inducements* sufficient to influence *Practice*, or that Man is *dreadfully corrupt*: The *Deists* may chuse which, or both, and let them avoid the Consequences if they can.

It had been easy to have said a great Deal more on this Head. The Subject would have admitted of considerable Enlargement; but this my Design will not allow. I intend to keep close to the Argument, and run out no further than is of Necessity for clearing the Force of that. And where the Case is plain, as I take it to be here, I content my self with touching at the *Heads* which clear the *Truth* under Debate.

CHAP. IX.

Shewing the Importance of knowing the Origin of Sin to the World. And the Defectiveness of Nature's Light as to this.

IT is not more clear that the Sun shines, than that the *whole World lies in Wickedness*. The *Creation* groans under the Weight of this unweildy Load, which lies so heavy upon it, that it is the Wonder of all who have any right Notions of the *Justice* or *Holiness* of GOD, that it has not sunk it into *Nothing*, or *exquisite Misery* before now. The *Heathens* have made bitter Complaints of it. And indeed if their Complaints had been left upon themselves, and had not been turn'd into Accusations of the *Holy GOD*, none could have wondred at them, or condemn'd them. For it is manifest to any one who will not stop his Ears, put out his Eyes, stifle his Conscience, forswear and abandon his Reason, that *the World is full of Sin*. What Nation or Place is free of *Idolatries*, *Blasphemies*, the raging of *Pride*, *Revenge*, *Perjuries*, *Rapes*, *Adulteries*, *Thefts*, *Robberies*, *Murders*, and other abominable Evils innumerable? And who sees not, that all these

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are the Effects of strong, prevailing, universal and contagious Corruptions and deprav'd Inclinations; from a Share in which, no Man can justly pretend himself free? And if he should, any one who strictly observes his Way, may easily implead him, either of *gross Ignorance* or *Disingenuity*.

To know how Things came to this Pass with the *World*, and trace *this Evil* to its Fountain, is a Business of great Importance to *Religion*. Yea, of so much Moment is it, that one can scarce tell how any Thing like *Religion* is to be maintain'd in the *World*, without some competent Knowledge of it.

1. If this is not known, we can never make any right Estimate of the *Evil* of *Sin*. If Men were by their original Constitution, without their own Fault, made of so wicked or infirm a Nature, as that either they were inclin'd to it, or unable to resist Temptations, amongst the Throng of which they were plac'd, it is impossible for them to look upon *Sin* as so detestable an *Evil* as really it is; or blame themselves so much for it, as yet they are bound to do. If it is quite otherwise, and Man were originally upright, and fell not into this Case, but by a Fault justly chargeable on him, 'tis certain, that quite other Apprehensions of *Sin* should be maintain'd. Now such as Mens Apprehensions are about the *Evil* of *Sin*, such will their Care be to avoid it, prevent it, or get it remov'd. And who sees not, that the Whole of *Religion* is easily reducible to these Things?

2. If the *Origin* of *Sin* is not understood, Man can never understand what he is oblig'd to in Way of Duty. If we derive *this Weakness*, *Wickedness* and *deprav'd Inclination* from our *first Constitution*, we can never look on our selves as oblig'd to such an *Obedience*, as the *Rectitude*, *Holiness*, and *Purity* of the *divine Nature*, seems to render necessary. And if we are uncertain as to this, we shall never know how far our Duty extends. And if we know not what is requir'd of us, how can we do it? To say we are bound to obey as far as we can, is to speak Nonsense, and what no Way satisfies the Difficulty: For this leaves us to judge of our own *Power*, opens a Door to Man to interpret the *Law* as he pleases, and charges GOD with such Folly in the Frame of the *Law*, as we dare scarce charge on any *humane Lawgiver*.

3. Without the Knowledge of the *Origin* of *Sin*, we can never know what Measures to take, in subduing our *corrupt Inclinations*. If we know not of what Nature they are, how they came to be so interwoven with our Frame, and so much of a Piece with our selves, we shall not know.

know where to begin Attempts for *Reformation*, or if it be practicable to eradicate them. And yet this must be done, otherwise we cannot with any Shew of Reason project *Happiness*. But the *Rise of Corruption* being hid, we shall neither know what is to be remov'd, nor where to begin our Work, nor how far Success to Attempts of this Kind may reasonably be hop'd for. And of how destructive Consequence this is to *all Religion* is easily seen.

4. If the *Origin of Sin* is not known, we will be at a Loss what Thoughts to intertain of GOD his *Holiness*, *Justice* and *Goodness*, yea and his *Wisdom* too. If our Natures were originally burdened with those corrupt Inclinations so twisted in with them, as now we find them; or if we were so infirm, as not to be able to resist a Throng of Temptations, among which we were plac'd, we will scarce be able to entertain such a high Regard for God's *Holiness*, *Goodness* and *Wisdom* in our *Make*, or of his *Justice* in dealing so by us. And if we suppose otherwise, we will still be confounded by our Darknes about any other Way we can possibly think of, whereby Things were brought to this Pass, and Mankind so universally precipitate into so miserable a Case.

5. If the *Origin of Evil* is not known, we shall never be able to judge what Estimate GOD will make of *Sin*: Whether he will look on it as *so evil* as to demerite any deep Resentment, or otherwise.

6. Hereon it follows, That the whole State of our Affairs with GOD, will be quite darkned and become unintelligible. We shall not know whether he shall Animadvert so heavily on us for our *Sins*, as to ruin us, or so slightly pass over them, as not to call us to an Account. If the Latter is suppos'd, *Obedience* is ruin'd; considering what Man's Inclinations and Temptations are: Who will obey, if no *Ruin* or *Hurt* is to be fear'd by *Sin*? If the Former is suppos'd, our *Hope* is ruin'd. We shall not know what Value GOD will put on our *Obedience*, if this is not known; whether he will not reject it for the sinful Defects cleaving to it. Nor shall we know whether he will pardon us, or upon what Terms, if we know not what Thoughts he has of *Sin*. And this we know not, nor can we possibly understand, unless we know how it came, and came to be so twisted in with our Natures.

Finally, Hereon depends any tolerable Account of the *Equity of GOD's Proceedings*, at least of his *Goodness* in dealing so with the World, subjecting it to such a Train of Miseries. If any Thing of *Sin* is chargeable justly upon Man's *Make* and *first Constitution*, it will be

be much to clear his *Justice*, but harder to acquite his *Goodness* in plaguing the World so. If otherwise; it will be easy to justify GOD: But how then were Men brought to this Case?

Thus we have shortly hinted at those Grounds that clear the Importance of the Case. An Inlargement on them would have made the dullest understand, that without some satisfying Account of the *Origin of Evil*, all *Religion* is left loose. The judicious will easily see it. It now remains that we make appear the *Insufficiency of Nature's Light*. To clear this Point, 'tis evident if we consider,

1. That most of the wise Men of the World have pass'd over this in Silence, as a Speculation too hard and high. The Effects of it were so sensible, that they could not but notice them, as the *Egyptians* did the Overflowing of their *Nile*. But when they would have trac'd these Streams up to their Source, they were forc'd to quit it as an unequal Chace. The Reason whereof is ingeniously, as well as solidly given by the judicious Dr. *Stillingfleet*, "The Reason

"was, says he, as *Corruption* increas'd in the *Origines Sacrae, Lib.*
 "World, so the Means of Instruction and Know- 3. *Cap. 3. Sect. 8.*
 "ledge decay'd; and so as the *Phanomina* grew
 "greater, the Reason of them was less understood: The Knowledge
 "of the History of the first Ages of the World, through which they
 "could alone come to the full Understanding of the true Cause of *Evil*,
 "insensibly decaying in the several Nations; insomuch that those
 "who are not at all acquainted with that History of the World, which
 "was preserved in sacred Records among the *Jews*, had Nothing
 "but their own uncertain Conjectures to go by, and some Kind of ob-
 "scure Traditions, which were preserved among them, which, while
 "they sought for to rectifie by their Interpretations, they made them
 "more obscure and false than they found them.

2. Others who would needs appear more learn'd, but were really less wise, offer'd Accounts, or pretended to say somewhat, rather to hide their own Ignorance, than explain what they spoke of. So obscure are they, that Nothing can be concluded from what they say, but that they were ignorant, and yet so disingenuous and proud that they would not own it. Among this Sort *Plato* is reck'ned, and with him *Pythagoras*, who tell us, "That the Principle of
 "Good is Unity, Finite, Quiescent, Streight, un- *Orig. Sacrae. ibid.*
 "even Number, Square, Right and Splendid; The *Sect. 11.*
 "Principle of Evil, Binary, Infinite, Crooked, Even,

"Long

“ Long of one Side, Unequal, Left, Obscure. Plutarch, as is noted by Dr. Stillingfleet, says, That the Opinion of Plato is very obscure, it being his Purpose to conceal it; but he saith in his old Age, in his Book de Legibus, ἡ δὲ αἰνιγματώδης ἐστὶ συμβολικῶς, without any Riddle and Allegory, he asserts the World to be mov'd by more than one Principle, by two at the least; the one of a good and benign Nature, the other contrary to it, both in it's Nature and Operations τὴν μὲν ἀγαθὴν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ ἐναντίαν ταύτῃ καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων διμικρῶν.

3. Another, and perhaps the greater Part, did plainly give the most absurd and ridiculous, not to say blasphemous, Accounts of this Matter. Some pretending all the *Vitiosity inherent in Matter*, which they suppos'd not created. The Folly, as well as Wickedness of this Opinion, is well laid open by the judicious Person last quoted. This was what Plato aim'd at, as Dr. Stillingfleet clears from Numenius a famous Syrian Platonick Philosopher who is thought to have liv'd in the second Century, who giving an Account of Pythagoras and Plato's Opinions, says, Pythagoras ait, “ *Existente Providentia, Mala quoque necessario subsistisse propterea quod Sylva sit & eadem sit Malitia prædita: Platonemque idem Numenius laudat, quod duas Mundi Animas autumet; Unam beneficentissimam; malignam alteram scil. Sylvam. Igitur juxta Platonem Mundo Bona sua Dei, tanquam Patris Liberalitate collata sunt; Mala vero Matris Sylvæ Vitio cohaeserunt.* The plain Case is, they thought GOD and Matter eternally coexistent, and that *Vitiosity* was inherent in Matter, and that GOD could not mend it. To

Max. Tyr. Ser. 25. this Purpose Maximus Tyrius a Platonick Philosopher, who liv'd in the second Century, speaks, That all the Evils that are in the World, are not the Works of Art, but the Affections of Matter. Seneca says, Non potest Seneca de Provid. Artifex mutare Materiam. This Way the Stoicks went. Tho' they who have studied them, pretend that there was some Difference betwixt Plato's Opinion and theirs.

They who would desire a more full Account, both of these Opinions, and the Absurdity and Impiety of them, may have it from Dr. Stillingfleet. But a great many of the Philosophers plainly maintain'd two *Anti-gods*, one Good and the other Evil. The Persians had their Oromasdes, to whom they ascrib'd all the Good, and Arimanius, on whom they father'd all their Evils. How many run this Way, any one may learn from Plutarch's Discourse of Isis and Osiris, and judge whether he himself was not of the same Mind. What was it that drove those great Men

Men on such wild Conceits, which are so absurd that they are not worth confuting? Nothing else but their Darkneſs about the *Riſe of Sin*. And how diſmal were the Conſequences of thoſe Notions and of this Darkneſs? What elſe drove ſo great a Part of the World to that Madneſs, to worſhip even the *Principle of Evil*? Was it not this, That they entertain'd perverſe Notions about the *Origin of Evils* both of *Sin* and *Puniſhment*?

4. Not to inſiſt on thoſe absurd Opinions, the later Accounts we have of this Matter, by Perſons who reject the *Scriptures*, after they have taken all the Help from them they think meet, tho' they are more poliſh'd, are not one Whit more ſatisfactory. For clearing this, we ſhall offer you the moſt conſiderable of this Sort that have occurr'd to us. We ſhall begin with *Simplicius* a *Phrygian Philoſopher* who liv'd in the *ſiſth Century*, and was a great Oppoſer of the *Scriptures*. He in his Commentary upon the XXXIV Chapter of *Epiſtetus*, ſpeaks thus, "The Soul of Man is *Comment. in Epiſt.*
" *Nexus utriuſque Mundi*, in the Middle between *Cap. 34.*

" thoſe more excellent Beings, which remain above
" (which he had taught to be incapable of *Sin*) with which it partakes
" in the Sublimity of its Nature and Underſtanding, and thoſe infe-
" rior terrestrial Beings, with which it communicates through the vi-
" tal Union which it hath with the Body, and by Reaſon of that
" Freedom and Indifferency which it hath, it is ſometimes aſſimilated
" to the one, ſometimes to the other of thoſe Extremes. So that while
" it approacheth to the Nature of the ſuperior Beings, it keeps it ſelf
" free from *Evil*; but becauſe of its Freedom, it may ſometimes ſink
" down into thoſe lower Things, and ſo he calls the *Cauſe of Evil* in
" the Soul, its voluntary Deſcent into this lower World, and immerſing
" it ſelf in the Feculency of terrestrial Matter. Much more he adds;
" but it all comes to this, That becauſe of the Freedom of the Will of
" Man, nothing elſe can be ſaid to be the *Author of Evil*, but the Soul.
We have likewiſe an Account from the *Oracles of Reaſon* much to
the ſame Purpoſe. *A. W.* a *Deiſt* in a Letter
to *Charles Blount* anſwering an Objection of Sir *Oracles of Reaſon,*
Charles Wolſeley's, againſt the Sufficiency of natu. *Page 197.*
ral Religion, gives this Account, " This gene-
" rally acknowledg'd Lapse of Nature, that it came, may be diſco-
" vered by natural Light; how it came, is reaſonable to conclude
" without Revelation, namely, by a Deviation from the right Rule of
" Reaſon

“ Reason implanted in us ; how he came to deviate from *this Rule*, or
 “ lapse, proceeds from the *Nature of Goodness*, originally given us,
 “ by our Creator, which Reason tells us to be an *arbitrary State of*
 “ *Goodness* only ; therefore not a *necessary Goodness* to which our Na-
 “ tures were constrain’d. In short, our Fall proceeds from our not
 “ being able to reason rightly on every Thing we act, and with *such*
 “ *Beings* we were created : For all our Actions are design’d by us to
 “ *some Good* which may arise to us : But we do not always distin-
 “ guish rightly of *that Good* : We often mistake *Bonum apparens* for
 “ the *Bonum reale*. *Decipimur Specie Recti*. The *Bonum jucundum* for
 “ Want of right Reasoning, is preferr’d to the *Bonum honestum* ; and the
 “ *Bonum vicinum*, tho’ it be less in it self, often carries it before the
 “ *Bonum remotum*, which is greater in its own Nature. No Man ever
 “ held that we could *appetere Malum qua Malum* ; and therefore I will
 “ not grant him a total Lapse in our Natures from GOD. For we see
 “ many born with vertuous Inclinations ; and tho’ all Men at some-
 “ times err, even the Best, in their Actions, it only shews that we
 “ were not created to a *necessitated Goodness*. ’Tis enough to prove no
 “ fatal Lapse, that many are prov’d, through the Course of their
 “ Lives, more prone to do *Good* than *Evil*, and that all Men do *Evil*
 “ only for Want of *right Reasoning* ; because the *Will* necessarily follows
 “ the *last Dictate of the Understanding*. The next and last whom we
 shall mention, is, the learn’d *Herbert*, whom the rest do but copy after.

De Religione Gen-
 tilium, Cap. 13. P.
 164.

Thus then he accounts for it ; “ *Quod ad Ma-*
 “ *lum Culpa spectat, hoc quidem non aliunde prove-*
 “ *nire, quem ab Arbitrio illo omnibus insito, inge-*
 “ *nitoque, quod tanquam Bonum eximium Deus*
 “ *Optimus Maximus nobis largitus est ; ex quo*
 “ *etiam a Belluis magis quam ipso Intellectu distinguimur : Quum tamen*
 “ *adeo ancipitis sit Natura, ut in utramque Partem flecti possit, fit ut in*
 “ *Malum saepe propendeat & dilabatur : Caterum per se est Beneficium*
 “ *plane Divinum, ejusque Amplitudinis & Præstantiæ, ut citra illud, ne-*
 “ *que boni esse possemus : Ecquis enim boni aliquid efficere dicitur, nisi*
 “ *quando in adversam Partem datur Optio ? Hinc igitur Malum Culpa*
 “ *accidere, quod nobilissima Anima Facultas, in sequiorem sua sponte Par-*
 “ *tem, nulloque cogente traducatur detorqueaturque.*

These three Accounts, in several Respects, run the same Way. It
 were easy however to set them by the Ears in some considerable Par-
 ticulars, and perhaps, to shew the Inconsistency of the several Authors
 with

with themselves, on these Heads: But this is not my Design to spend Time on Things, whereby Truth will not gain much, as, perhaps, they contain the Sum of what *Reason* can say on the Head, so we shall now shew how very far they are from satisfying in the Case. The Substance of them may be reduc'd to those three Propositions.

1. *That Man's Body sways the Soul, to which it is join'd, to Things suitable to it self, which are Evil.* This *Simplicius* more than insinuates.

2. *That as Reason is the Guide of the Will, which necessarily follows its last Dictate; so the Will's Inclination to Evil flows from our not being able to reason rightly.* This the Oracles of Reason give plainly as a Response in the Words now quoted.

3. *The Will is ancipitis Naturæ, perfectly indifferent, equally capable of, and sway'd to Evil and Good.* This all the three concur in. Its like a nice Ballance which stands even, but is easily sway'd to either Side.

But now it is easy to multiply Difficulties against this Account, and shew how it no Way clears, but rather involves the Matter more. And,

1. I would desire to know whether that inferior Part, the *Body*, or terrestrial Part of Man, call it which you will, sways to any Thing, not suited to its *original Frame and Perfection*, or not? If it aims at nothing, bends or inclines to nothing, but what is *perfective* of it self, I desire to know how *that* can be faulty? How can *this Body* be made a Part of a Composition, wherein it is faulty for it, to aim at what is truly *perfective* of its Nature? How can it be criminal for the *Soul* to aim at enobling and satisfying the Capacities of that, which is so nearly united to it self? How is it consistent with the *Wisdom* of GOD, to unite *two Beings*, the one whereof cannot reach its own Perfection without Hurt to the other? If it is said, That it inclines to what contributes not to its *own Perfection*; then I desire to know how it came to be so deprav'd as to have a Tendency to its *own Detriment*? How it was consistent with the *Wisdom* of GOD to make it so? How was it consistent with the *Goodness* of GOD to associate it, when so made, with another more *noble Being* to which it must prove a Burden; yea, which must sway to that, which proves the Ruin of the whole Composition? And how can Man be blam'd for doing that, to which his Nature inevitably must carry him? For if he is thus compounded, his *Body*, earthly Part, or lower Faculties sway to *Evil*; his
Will.

Will is equally inclinable to both ; and, in this Case, how can the Composition be otherwise, than deprav'd ? For my Part I see not how it could be otherwise ; or how GOD can justly punish it for being so, upon the Supposition laid down.

2. If it be asserted that we are not, by our *original Constitution*, able to *reason rightly*, in what concerns our *own Duty*, as we have heard from the *Oracles of Reason* ; then I desire to know if we are not necessitate by our very *Make* and Constitution to err ? If we are to believe, what the same *Oracle* utters, that the *Will* must follow necessarily the *Understanding* ; then I desire to know, if we are not necessitate to Sin ? If Things are thus and thus, we must either believe them to *be*, or believe that this *Oracle* gives a false Response ; then I desire to know how GOD could make us necessarily Evil ? How can he punish us for it ? How can this be reconcil'd with the rest of this Doctrine, about the arbitrary State of Man's Goodness ? I might ask not a few other Queries, but perhaps these will suffice.

3. If the *Will* be, in its own Nature, perfectly free and indifferent, then I desire to know, whether there is any Thing in that Composition, whereof it is a Part, or to which it is join'd, or any Thing in the Circumstances wherein Man is plac'd, swaying it to the worst Side ? If there is any Thing either in Man's Constitution or Circumstances, swaying him wrong ; then I desire to know, is there any Thing to ballance them ? Whether there is, or is not any Thing to keep him even ? I would desire to know how any Thing came to be in his Constitution, to sway him wrong ? If there is any Thing to ballance these Inducements to *Sin*, or Inclinations, then Man is perfectly indifferent still : And about this we shall speak anon. If there is a *Will*, equally capable of *Good* and *Evil*, and Man has somewhat in his Constitution or Circumstances, at least swaying him to *Evil*, then I desire to know, how it was possible for him to evite it ? If he has nothing determining him more to *Evil* than to *Good*, or if any Thing that inclines to *Evil* is ballanced, by other Things of no less Force, determining and swaying him to *Good*, then many Things may be enquir'd : How comes it to pass, that tho' Man is equally inclinable to *Good* or *Evil*, that all Men almost choose *Evil* ? Yea I need not put an *almost* to it. It is a strange Thing to suppose all Men equally dispos'd to *Good* or *Evil*, and yet none choose the *Good*.

4. I do not know how this Notion of *Man's Liberty*, which is easily granted to be in it self, if the Notion of it is rightly stated, a *Perfection*,
will

will take with considerate Men, that it consists in a *perfect Indifferency to Good or Evil*: For if this is a necessary Perfection of the rational Nature, without which it cannot be call'd *Good*, as *Herbert* clearly asserts, in his Words above quoted; then I ask, What shall become of those Natures *unalterably Good*, of which *Simplicius* talks? Is it absurd to suppose, that there may be such? Are they, if they be less perfect, because incapable of that which debases and depraves them? Is *GOD Good*, who has beyond Dispute no such *Liberty* as this? Is an *Indifferency* to commit Sin or not to sin, a great Perfection? If it be, is it greater, than not to be capable of sinning? They may imbrace this Notion of *Liberty* who will, and fancy themselves perfect, I shall not for this reckon them so.

5. This Account of Man as equally inclin'd to *Good* or *Evil*, is either an Account of Man's Case as he now is, or as at first made: If Man is now otherwise, to wit, inclin'd more to *Evil* than *Good*, how came he to be so? This is the Difficulty we desire to be satisfy'd about. If this be the Case he was made in, and still continues in, then, I say, it is utterly false, and contradictory to the Ears, Eyes and Conscience of all the World. Who sees not that Man is plainly, strongly, and I may add universally inclin'd to *Evil*? The wiser *Heathens* have own'd it. And it is plainly made out against the most impudent Denyer. *Hierocles's* Words, as I find them translated by an excellent Person, are memorable to this Purpose. "Man,

"says he, is of his own Motion inclin'd to follow the Evil and leave the Good. There a certain Strife bred in his Affections; he hath a free Will, which he abuseth, binding himself wholly to encounter the Laws of GOD. And this Freedom it self is nothing else, but a Willingness to admit that which is not Good, rather than otherwise. This is a true State of the Matter from a *Heathen*.

*Hierocles Carmin.
Aur. Transl. Reas. of
Script. Belief, P. 146.*

6. The Supposition of Man's being made *perfectly indifferent* is *injurious* to *GOD*, who cannot be suppos'd, without Reflection on him, to have put Man in such a Case. The least that can be said, preserving the Honour due to the *Divine Excellencies*, is that *GOD* gave a *Law* to Man, suitable to the *Rectitude* of his *own Nature* and to *Man's Happiness* and *Perfection*; that he endued him with an Ability to know *this Law*, the Obligations he lay under to obey it, and the Inducements that might have fortify'd him in his Obedience against the Force of
any

any Temptation which he might meet with. If this be not asserted, it will not be possible to keep GOD from *Blame*, which all that own him, are concern'd to take Care of: For how could he bind Man to obey a *Law*, which he did not make known to him, or at least gave him a Power to know? If he laid him open to Temptations, and made him incapable of discovering, what might antidote their Force, if he would use it, what shall we think of his *Goodness*? Further, we must own that the *Will* of Man was made inclinable, tho' not immutably so, to its own Perfection: How else was it worthy of its Author? Finally, we must own that Man had no Affection or Inclination in him, that was really contradictory to that *Law*, which he was subjected to, and which tended to his Happiness and Perfection. If this is deny'd, then I ask, Were not these Inclinations sinful? Was that *Being* worthy of GOD, that had no Tendency to its own Perfection? But on the contrary, what was inclinable to its own Ruin?

7. This being the least, that can without manifest Reproach to the *Wisdom, Goodness and Justice* of the Creator, be suppos'd in Favours of Man's *original Constitution*; I desire to know, is this the Case still, or is it not? If it is not, then how came it to be otherwise? How comes Man originally to be worse now, than at first? How is this consistent with the *Deists* Principles, that there is no Lapse? If it be asserted, we are in the same State still, how then comes all the World to be full of Wickedness? How is this reconcilable with the Experiences and Consciences of Men, that assures them of the contrary?

8. If it is thought enough to resolve all this, as to *actual Failings*, into the *Choice* of Man; yet what shall we say as to that *Darkness* as to Duty, which we heard the *Deists* confessing, in their *Oracles of Reason*? How came that *Inability* to Reason rightly, which we have before demonstrated Man under, and which our Adversaries will own! Again how come we to have vitious Inclinations so strongly rooted in our Natures! Strong they are; for they trample upon our *Light*, the *Penalties* of *Laws Divine and Humane*; yea and the *Smartings* of our own *Conscience*. The Drunkard and unclean Person finds his Health ruin'd, and yet in Spight of this, his Inclination makes him run on in the Vice that has ruin'd him: And the like is evident in other Cases innumerable. Deeply rooted they are: They are some Way twisted in with the Constitutions of our Body, and no less fix'd in our Souls. So fix'd they are, that, tho' our own Reason condemns them, it cannot remove them. Tho' sometimes Fear restrains them as to the *outward Acts*;

As; yet it cannot eradicate the *Inclination*. Instruction and all humane Endeavours cannot do it. A fam'd *Seneca* that understood so much, who undertook to teach others, and perhaps has spoke and writ better than most of the *Heathens*; yet by all his Knowledge and all his Endeavours, owns *this Corruption* so deeply rooted in himself, that he expected not to get rid of it. *Non perveni ad Sanitatem, ne perveniam quidem: Delinimentis magis quam Remedia Podagræ meæ compono, contentus si rarius accedit, & si minus terminatur.*

9. Not only so, but further, how come *these Inclinations* to be born with us? Grow up with us? That they are so, is evident. We no sooner begin to act, than to act perversly. We no sooner shew any Inclinations, than we shew that our Inclinations are *evil*. Yea, among *Christians*, where there are many vertuous Persons, who give the best Example, the best Instruction, and use the best Discipline for the Education of their Children in Vertue; yet we see the Children discover Inclinations so strong, as are not to be restrain'd by all these Endeavours, much less eradicated: And, so early are they there, that they cannot be prevented by the most timeous Care.

10. It will not help the Matter to tell us, That there are some born with vertuous Inclinations. For 1. If all are not so, the Difficulty remains. How came these to be born otherwise, of whom we have been speaking! How came their Frame to be different from, nay and worse than that of others! Are they under the same Law? If so, why have they no Impediments, and less Power of Obedience? 2. We would be glad to see the Persons condescended on, that are void of vitious Inclinations, that we might ask them some Questions. You say you are born with vertuous Inclinations. Well, but have you no ill Inclinations? If you are no Drunkard, Adulterer, &c. yet have you no Inclination to Pride, Prodigality, Neglect of GOD, Covetousness, or somewhat like? I fear the Man that can answer plainly in the Negative here, will not be easily found. And till we see him, we deny there is any such. 3. To confirm this, several Persons, whom the World has look'd on as vertuously inclin'd from their Infancy, have, when seriously acquainted with Christianity, own'd that they were as wickedly inclin'd as others; only by Help of their Constitution, they were not so much prompted to those Evils, which are most observed and condemn'd in the World. And this Account has been given by Persons of Judgment, whose Capacity, nor Ingenuity cannot reasonably be question'd. Finally, the Ground whereon *A. W.* pronounces against an universal Lapse, viz.

That we cannot *appetere Malum qua Malum*, is ridiculous: For this is a Thing perfectly inconsistent, not only with the due Exercise, but the very Nature of our rational Faculties: And if notwithstanding this Impossibility of any Man's desiring *Evil as Evil*, so many are deeply corrupted, no imaginable Reason can be assign'd, why all may not be so, without supposing that we can *appetere Malum qua Malum*.

To conclude then, it is upon the Whole evident, That Reason can never trace this Matter to its proper Source. Our Consciences condemn us indeed, and so acquit the Deity. But without *Revelation*, we can never understand upon what Grounds we are condemn'd by our selves, nor how the Deity is to be justified; and so this Sentence of our Consciences involves the Matter more and increases the Difficulty. It is not from any distinct View of the particular Way how we come to be guilty, and how GOD comes to be free of Blame, that Conscience is led to this Sentence. And therefore, how to come to any Satisfaction about the Matter, that may liberate us from the Inconveniencies above-mention'd, which are really subversive of *all Religion*, and can reasonably be suppos'd available to us, Reason can never satisfy us.

Since these Gentlemen, with whom we have to do, find it their Interest to deny any *Lapse*, I shall, to what has been said, add a short, but judicious and solid Confirmation of this, from a Person of a more than ordinary Reach, I mean Dr. How: Who, after he has quoted many Testimonies, from *Heathen Authors*, proving this *Lapse*, reasons for it, and confirms it further from Arguments not easily to be answered: His Words run thus,

“ If we consider, can it be so much as imaginable to us, That the present State of Man, is his *primitive State*, or that he is now such, as he was at first made? “ For neither is it conceivable, the blessed GOD should have made a Creature, with an Aversion to the only important Ends, whereof it is *naturally capable*: Or particularly that he created Man, with a Disaffection to himself; or, that ever he, at first, design'd a *Being* of so high Excellency, as the Spirit of Man, to trudge so meanly, and be so basely servile, to terrene Inclinations; or, since there are manifestly Powers in him, of a superior and inferior Sort and Order, the meaner should have been, by *original Institution*, fram'd to command; and the more noble, and excellent, only to obey, and serve;

Dr. How's *Living Temple*, Part 2. P. 121, 122.

“ serve; as now every one that observes, may see the common Case
“ with Man is.

“ And how far he is swerved from what he was, is easily conjecturable
“ by comparing him with the *Measures*, which shew what he *should*
“ be. For it cannot be conceiv'd for what End Laws were ever given
“ him; if at least, we allow them not the *Measures* of his *primitive*
“ *Capacity*, or deny him ever to have been in a *Possibility to obey*.
“ Could they be intended for his Government, if Conformity to them
“ were *against*, or *above* his Nature? Or were they only for his Con-
“ demnation? Or *for what*, if he was never capable of obeying them?
“ How inconsistent were it with the *Goodness* of the blessed GOD,
“ that the Condemnation of his Creatures should be the *first Design* of
“ his giving them Laws! And with his *Justice*, to make his Laws the
“ Rule of *Punishment*, to whom they could never be the Rule of *Obedi-*
“ *ence and Duty*! Or with his *Wisdom*, to frame a *Systeme and Body*
“ of Laws, that should never serve for either Purpose! And so be,
“ upon the Whole, useful for nothing. The common Reason of
“ Mankind teacheth us to estimate the *Wisdom and Equity* of Law-
“ givers, by the Suitableness of their Constitutions to the Genius and
“ Temper of the People, for whom they are made; and we commonly
“ reckon nothing can more slur and expose *Government*, than the
“ imposing of Constitutions, most probably impracticable, and which
“ are never likely to obtain. How much more incongruous must it be
“ esteem'd to enjoin such as never possibly could! Prudent Legislators,
“ and studious of the common Good, would be shy to impose upon
“ Men, under their Power, against their Genius and common Usages,
“ neither alterable easily, nor to any Advantage; much more absurd
“ were it, with great *Solemnity*, and *weighty Sanctions*, to enact Statutes,
“ for brute Creatures: And wherein were it more to Purpose, to
“ prescribe unto Men strict Rules of Piety and Vertue, than to Beasts
“ or Trees, if the former had not been capable of observing them,
“ as the latter were not? I believe the *Deists* will not easily overthrow
this nervous Discourse.

C H A P. X.

Proving Nature's Light unable to discover the Means of obtaining Pardon of Sin, or to shew that it is attainable.

THAT *all have sinn'd* is sufficiently clear from the foregoing Discourse. That it is of Importance to understand the *Rise* of *Sin*, and that *Nature's Light* is unable to trace its Original, has been likewise evinc'd. But all this were indeed of less Consideration, if *Nature's Light* could assure us of *Pardon*, or direct as to the Means whereby it may be obtain'd. But here it is no less defective, than as to the former. That we are all guilty of *Sin*, even the *Deists* do acknowledge; the *Oracles of Reason* own that *all Men at sometimes err, even the best, in their Actions*. And the Evidence of it is such, that none can get over the Truth, if he is not plainly resolv'd to deny what is most evident. Now this being the Case, that we have all transgress'd; it is of the highest Importance, to know, whether GOD will pardon us, or upon *what Terms* he will do it? If he punish us, what a Case are we in? How can they, who fear *Punishment*, expect *Rewards*? But because this is a Difficulty of no small Importance, and the *Deists*, since they see they cannot clear it, they make it their Business to obscure the Importance of the Case, and render it more involved; we shall therefore,

- I. *State the Case, and clear the Importance of it.*
- II. *Discover the Weakness of Nature's Light about it.*
- III. *Speak fully to a particular Exception about Repentance.*

S E C T. I.

Wherein the Importance of the Difficulty is stated.

IF the *Deists* should allow *Sin* to be so great an *Evil*, as we pretend it is, it would exceedingly embarrass them; therefore they labour to smooth the Matter by telling us, That either it is no *Evil*, or one
of.

of not so great Consideration, as is commonly imagin'd: But the Wildness and Unreasonableness of this Attempt will be easily remov'd, by a Consideration of the *Evil* of *Sin*. It is not our Design to write largely on this Head, but only to condescend on a few of those Considerations, whereon we insist for proving *Sin* to be exceeding sinful: Which, albeit they are built on rational Grounds; yet we are led to them by the Assistance of reveal'd Light.

1. *Sin* is a Transgression of a Law; the highest Law, the Law of the supreme and righteous Governour of the World. Where there is no Law, there is no Transgression. And such as the Law is, such is the Transgression. There is no more just Way of measuring the *Evil* of *Sin*, than by considering the Law it violates. The Law bears the Impress of the highest Authority, that of the supreme Ruler of the Universe. Every Transgression must therefore import, if not a Contempt, yet certainly a Want of due Regard to this Authority, which how Criminal it is in Man, who is as to *Being*, *Preservation* and *Well-being*, every Way dependent, is easily understood. Moreover, this Law is not a meer arbitrary Appointment, but such as is the necessary Result of the Nature of GOD and Man; and therefore the Violation of it, imports no less, than an Accusation of the Rectitude of GOD's Nature, whence the Law results; and charges Unsuitableness thereto, upon the Nature of Man, as being so made, that, without Wrong to it self, it cannot subject to the Rule of GOD's Government. And who sees not how deeply this reflects on GOD?

2. *Sin* contradicts the great Design of Man's *Being*. GOD made us and not we our selves. It is Blasphemy to alledge, that Infinite Wisdom made so noble a Creature, as Man, without Design. Nor can it reasonably be pretended, that the chief Aim of GOD in making him was any other, than his having the Self-satisfaction of having acted as became him, and having made a Work every Way worthy of his Wisdom and Holiness. And since Man also was capable of proposing Designs, it is foolish to imagine, that GOD either could or would allow him to make any other his chief End than the Pleasure of GOD; or acting so as to make it appear, that he was every Way worthy of his Author. But when Man sins, he plainly counteracts what GOD design'd, and he was oblig'd to design; for he pleases not GOD, but himself; and this is, what in him lies to frustrate GOD of the Design he had in his Work, and debase the *Being* and *Powers* given him for the Honour

Honour of GOD, by employing them against him, and using them in Contradiction to his declar'd Will.

3. *Sin* misrepresents GOD. The Works of GOD bear an Impress of GOD's *Wisdom* and *Power*. Man only was made capable of representing his *moral Perfections*, his *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Truth*, and the like. But when he sins, he not only fails of his Duty, but really misrepresents GOD his Maker, as one who approves Sin, that is directly cross to his Will, which is ever congruous to the *Holiness* of his Nature; or, at least, as one, who either wants Will or Power to crush the Contraveener; and so he is represented either as *Unholy*, or *Impotent*; or one, who can tamely allow his Will to be counteracted by a Creature he has made and sustains. But what horrid Reflections are these on the Holy GOD?

4. *Sin* accuses GOD of Want of *Wisdom* and *Goodness* in appointing Laws which were not for his Creature's Good, and which he could not obey without Detriment; of *Envy*, in barring the Creature by a Law, from that which is necessary to his Happiness; of *Insufficiency*, to satisfy the Creature he has made, while he is oblig'd to seek for that elsewhere, which is not to be found in him, in the Way of Obedience; and of *Folly*, in making such a Law, as cannot be expected to be obey'd, in Regard the Creature subjected to it, gains more by breaking than by keeping of it.

Finally, to crown all, *Sin* dethrones GOD, and sets the Creature in his Room. The Honour of GOD's Law and Authority and the Sinners Good are wickedly supposed to be inconsistent, and the latter is preferr'd. The Will of the Creator and Creature cross on another, and the Creature's Will is preferr'd. The Friendship, Favour, and Sufficiency of Deity is laid in Ballance against some other imaginary Good, and Decision is given against GOD. These are a few of the many Evils of *Sin*. They are not strain'd ones. This is not a Rhetorical Declaration against *Sin*, wherein Things are unjustly aggravate to raise *Odium* against it; but a plain Account of a few of the *Evils* of it, which yet is infinitely short of what the Case would not admit. But who can fully represent the *Evil* that strikes against *Infinite Goodness*, *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Wisdom*, and *supreme Authority*? Who can unfold its Aggravations, save he who knows what GOD is, and what he is to Man, and what Man is, and how many Ways he is dependent on, subject, obliged and indebted to GOD? Well therefore may Sin be said to have an *Infinity of Evil* in it.

The *Deists* to evade the Difficulties arising from this *Evil of Sin* take different Courses. Some plainly deny any such Thing as *Evil*, or that there is any Thing *morally Good or Bad*. *Thomas Aikenhead*, who was executed at *Edinburgh*, *January 8. 1697*, for his *Blasphemies*, in his Paper he delivered from the Scaffold, tells us what his Thoughts were in this Matter, and upon what Grounds they were built. When in his *Rational Enquiries* he came to consider, whether we were capable of offending *GOD*, he tells us, "That after much pondering and serious Consideration, he concluded the *Negative*. The fam'd Mr. *Hobbs* was not of a very different Mind, for he plainly asserts, "That there is nothing *Leviathan, Cap. 6.*
 " *Good or Evil in it self*, nor any common Laws
 " constituting what is naturally just and unjust: But all Things are
 " to be measured by what every Man judgeth fit, where there is no
 " civil Government; and by the Laws of So-
 " ciety, where there is one. And elsewhere, *Hobbs.*
 " before Men entred into a state of civil Govern-
 " ment, there was not any Thing *just or unjust*, forasmuch as *just*
 " and *unjust* are the Relatives of humane Laws; every Action being
 " in it self indifferent. And whether *Spinoza* was not of the same
 Mind, is left to those to judge, who have Time and Leisure to trace his Meaning, in his obscure and designedly involved Way of writing. But surely this Proposition in his *Atheistical Ethicks* looks very like it,
 " *Si Homines liberi nascerentur (liber autem est juxta Spinozam, qui*
 " *secundum Ductum vel ex Ductu Rationis agit) nullum Boni & Mali forma-*
 " *rent Conceptum, quamdiu liberi essent.* Mr. *Hobbs* has been learnedly confuted by many, such as Dr. *Cumberland*, Mr. *Tyroll*, and almost all who write of the *Law of Nature*. *Spinoza* has likewise been examin'd by *Wittichius* and many others. The first, viz. *Thomas Aikenhead* his Grounds I shall propose and examine.

The first in his own Words runs thus, "I thought, says he, a great Part of *Morality*, if not all, proceeded *ex Arbitrio Hominum*, as of that of a Kingdom, or Common-wealth, or what most Men think convenient for such and such Ends, and these Ends are always terminate upon being congruous to the Nature of Things; now we see that according to Mens *Fantasia* Things are congruous or incongruous to their Natures, if not to the *Body*, yet to the *thinking Faculty*.

The

The Sum of this confus'd Discourse, which probably he learn'd from *Hobbs*, amounts to this; GOD has fix'd no Law to our *moral Actions*, by which they are to be regulate. These, which are call'd *moral Laws*, are only the Determinations of Governments, or the concurring Judgment of Men, concerning what they think meet to be done for their own Ends. That what some judge *meet* and *congruous*, others may find unsuitable to their Nature and Ends, and so are not oblig'd to obey. But 1. Are not all these ungrounded Assertions, whereof no Proof is offered; but the Author's deluded Fancy? Has it not been irrefragably demonstrated by as many as discourse of *moral Good* and *Evil*, that antecedently to any Government among Men, we are under a Law, the *Law of Nature*, and that this is the *Will of GOD*. 3. If all these had kept Silence, does not the Thing it self speak? What can be more evident, than that there is a *Law of Nature*, and that this is the *Law of GOD*? We are certain, that we are made of rational Natures, capable of Laws and Government. We are no less sure that GOD made us, and made us so. It is Self-evident, that to him who made us, it belongs to govern, and dispose of us to those Ends, for which we were made. And we by our very *Beings* are bound to obey, submit, and subject our selves to his Will and Pleasure, who made us, and on whom we every Way depend; and therefore his *Will*, if he make it known, is a *Law*; and the *highest Law* to us. Again, it's clear that this Reason, if we attend to it, tells us that some Things are to be done and some Things left undone; such as these, that we are to serve, love, obey and honour him that made us, upholds us, and on whom we every Way depend; that we are to carry toward our Fellow-creatures, as it becomes those, who have the *same Original* with us, who are subject to the *same Rule*, are oblig'd to pursue the *same Ends*; and that we are to dispose of our selves, as the Author of our Nature allows us. These are all, if not Self-evident, yet next to it, and easily deducible from Principles that are so. Further the *Reason* that's implanted in us by GOD, tells us so, we are to take what it leads us to, while duly us'd, as the *Will of GOD*, and so a *Law* to us.

Sir Ch. Wolfeley " For whatever Judgment GOD makes a Man
Scripture Belief, " with, concerning either himself, or other
 P. 32, 33. " Things; it is GOD's Judgment, and whatever
 " is his Judgment, is a Law to Man, nor can
 " he neglect or oppose it without Sin; being
 " in his Existence made with a necessary Subjection to GOD. Such
 " and

“ and such Dictates being the natural Operations of our Minds, the
 “ Being and essential Constitution of which, in right Reasoning, we
 “ owe to GOD; we cannot but esteem them the Voice of GOD with-
 “ in us, and consequently his Law to us.

What he tells us of Mens different Apprehensions, about what is *Right* or *Wrong* makes Nothing to the Purpose. That only shews that in many Instances we are in the Dark as to what is *Good* and *Evil*, which is granted; but will not infer that there is no fix'd Measure of *Good* and *Evil*. In many general Truths, all who apply themselves to think, understand the Terms, and have the Truths propos'd, do agree. And perhaps, all that is knowable of our Duty by the *Light of Nature*, is deducible from such Principles of Morality, as all rational Men who have them fairly propos'd to them, must assent to. And Deductions from Laws, when duly made, are of equal Authority with the Principles from which they are infer'd. And finally, when Men in Pursuance of their perverse Natures, follow what is cross to those Dictates of *Reason*, they are condemn'd by their own Consciences, which shews them under the Obligation of a *Law*, and that acting in a Congruity to their Natures as corrupt, is not the Standard they are oblig'd to walk by, since their own *Reason* checks them for doing it. They who would desire to have this Matter fully discours'd, may read others who have done it design'dly, of whom there is great Plenty.

His second Reason runs thus; “ Also we do not know what is *Good*
 “ or *Evil* it it self, if not thus, Whatsoever can be attributed to GOD,
 “ that is *Good*; and what cannot, is *Evil*. And we know not what
 “ can be attributed to GOD, but such Things as by a Deduction we
 “ ascribe to him, we call *Perfect*, and such we deny to be in him, we
 “ call *Imperfect*, and so we most ignorantly commit a Circle. There
 “ is no other Notion of Things in themselves *Good* or *Evil*.

It is much harder to find the Sense of these Words, if they have any, than to answer the Argument. The Design of it is to prove, That there is no Standard whereby we may judge what is *Good* and what is *Evil*. The Force of the Argument amounts to this, *That there is no Way how we come to know any Thing to be Good, but by this, that it may be ascrib'd to GOD*. But we cannot know whether it is to be ascrib'd to GOD, unless we know that it is *Perfect* or *Good*.

This is thin Sophistry, which I might easily expose, were it to any Purpose to discover the Weakness of that, which its Author was ashamed of and disown'd. As to the *first Proposition*, *That there is no o-*

ther Way to know whether any Thing be Good or Evil, but this, that it can or cannot be ascrib'd to GOD. 1. The complex Proposition is false; for there are other Ways whereby we may know Things to be Good or Evil. And this holds, whether we take it in a *physical* or a *moral Sense*. We know that to be *morally Good*, which GOD enjoins us to do. We know the Will of GOD in some Instances, from the Natures GOD has given us; and from these Instances, our Reasons can infer others. As to *physical Good*, we know Things to be Good or Perfect, by Acquaintance with the Nature of the Things, and by the self-evident Notions of Perfection: For there are some Things, such as *Dependence*, *Subjection*, and the like, which without any reasoning about the Matter, we understand to be Imperfect or Perfect. As soon as we understand the Terms, and know that a Perfection is that which it is better for any Being to have than to want: And then what these particular Words, *Dependence*, *Subjection*, &c. signifie. This alone overthrows his whole Argument. 2. The Maxim which he fixes as a Standard, That is Good, which may be ascrib'd to GOD; and that is not, which may not be ascrib'd to him: If it is taken in its full Extent, is false as to *moral Good*; of which the only Question is: For it is certain, That it is Good for Man to be a Dependent, a Subject, &c. which cannot be ascrib'd to GOD. If it is taken in a *physical Sense*, it is not to the Purpose: And besides it would even in this Sense need some Caution.

As to his other Proposition, That we cannot otherwise know what is to be ascrib'd to GOD, than by knowing that it is Good or Perfect, it can scarce be suppos'd to speak of Good in a *moral Sense*; and in any other Sense it is impertinent. If it is understood in a *moral Sense*, it is likewise false, for we may know that Things which are not in their own Nature *moral Perfections*, belong to GOD; such as *Power*, *Omnipresence*, &c. If it be understood in any other Sense, we have Nothing to do with it.

The next Head that he adds is, " That all Men will confess that
 " any Thing may be *morally Evil* and *Good* also, and consequently any
 " Thing Decent or Indecent, Moral or Immoral. Neither, tho' there
 " were Things in themselves *Evil*, (if we do not apprehend other
 " Things instead of them) can we have any Inclination thereunto?
 " Otherwise the *Will* could wish *Evil*.

But 1. Who will grant him (in any other Sense that will be subservient to his Purpose) that all *Actions* are indifferent? I know none but Men of his own Principles. 2. As for what he pretends, That we cannot

cannot incline to that which is in its own Nature *Evil*, unless it be under the Notion of *Good*, I see not what this says for him; it is enough that we can do that Action which is evil and prohibited, yea, and which we know is prohibited, to constitute *Sin*, and make the Sinner deeply guilty.

But not to insist any further on this inconsiderable *Trifler*, whose undigested Notions scarce deserve the Consideration we have given them; and much less did they become the awful Gravity of the Place where they were delivered. There are others of the *Deists* who think it not safe to venture thus far: Because in Effect, this overthrows all Religion and establishes plain *Atheism*: Yet they mince the Matter and lessen *Sin* as much as they can.

Herbert goes this Way, telling us the Sinner's Excuse, That 1. "*Homines sunt Natura sua fragiles Peccatoque obnoxii.* 2. *Peccata Hominum non tam in Dei Contumeliam, quam in propriam Utilitatem, sub Boni alicujus apparentis Obtentu fieri plerumque; ac licet in eo Homines fallerentur, nihil tamen infenso in Deum Animo patratum esse.* That is, Men are by Nature frail and liable to Sin: And they do not sin out of *Contempt* of GOD, but for their own Profit, while Sin appears under the *Shew* of Good. And albeit in this Men are deceiv'd, yet there is Nothing done with any ill Design against GOD.

A. W. in his Letter to *Charles Blount*, pleads, "That tho' the Offence is committed against an Infinite Being, we are but finite Creatures, who commit Sin." *Oracles of Reas. P.---*

But now, as to the first of these Reasons or Excuses, I fear, if it plead any Thing, it casts the Fault over on GOD. Are we to excuse our selves from our Frailty? Well, either we are made so frail that we are not able to obey, or we are not; if we are able to obey, then where is the Excuse, when GOD requires no more of us than what he gave us Power to perform? If we are not able, then how came GOD to subject us to a *Law* we were not able to obey? If we have rendred our selves unable, is not this our Fault?

As to the Second, "That we do not Sin out of Contempt of the Deity, but for our own Advantage. I answer, 1. The Principle the Sinner goes on, according to this Apology made for him, viz. That the Thing he does, tho' it crosses the Law of God, yet makes for his own Advantage,

is highly injurious to and blasphemous against GOD : For it supposes that GOD has barr'd Man from what contributes to his Happiness, and supposes that more Advantage is to be had by Disobedience, which is a high Aggravation of the Fault. 2. I will not grant him, that there is no Opposition in the Heart to GOD. What tho' there be not plain, declar'd, direct and open Hostility ; yet there is an Alienation of Affection, Aversion from Converse with, and a Neglect of GOD to be found with all in more or less, of which their Actions are a sufficient Proof.

As to the Third, *That an Offence, tho' against an infinite GOD, is lessen'd by the Consideration of the Sinner's being finite.* I answer, 1. This Excuse pleads for all Sin alike : For let the Sinner sin never so deeply, yet he is *finite* still. 2. If this be well consider'd, it is perfectly ridiculous : For the Measure of Sin, its Greatness is not to be taken this Way, but the contrary : For provided the Object against whom its committed, is *Infinite*, the meaner the Person be that commits it, the greater still is the Fault.

But in very Deed, all these Attempts to extenuate *Sin*, as they are useless to Sinners, who are not to be judged by Man, but GOD, and not to be dealt with according to the Estimate he makes, but that which GOD makes of *Sin* ; so likewise they sinell rank of the Want of a due Regard for the Honour of the *Deity*, and are of the worst Consequence to the World, since they tend to encourage Sin, open a Door to Impiety, and embolden Sinners to go on in Courses they too much incline to. Besides, such Excuses for *Sin* do but ill become Persons who make such an horrible Out-cry against the *Doctrine of Satisfaction* upon all Occasions, as having a Tendency to make *Forgiveness* cheap in Sinners Eyes, and to imbolden Men to Sin without Fear. May not the Charge be here retorted ? Who gives the greatest Encouragement to Sin, he that asserts the *Necessity of a Satisfaction*, or he who *extenuates Sin* to that Degree as to encourage the Sinner to hope he may get off without a Satisfaction ? I shall, to what has been said, subjoin a few Words from a late Discourse, if the Quotation seem long, the Excellency of it will easily excuse it ; besides, that it is so full to the Purpose, and leads so directly to that which is the Design of what hitherto has been said. “ Furthermore, it is to

Dr. How *Living Temple, Part 2. Pag.* “ be considered, That the *Rights* of the *divine Government* ; the *Quality* and *Measure* of *Offences* committed against it ; and *when,*

237, 238, 239.

“ or

“ or upon *what Terms* they may be remitted ; or in *what Case* it may
 “ be congruous to the Dignity of that Government, to recede from
 “ *such Rights*, are Matters of so high a Nature, that it becomes us to
 “ be very sparing in making any Estimate about them, especially a
 “ diminishing one.— Even among *Men*, how sacred Things are *Majesty*
 “ and the *Rights of Government*? And how much above the
 “ Reach of a vulgar Judgment? Suppose a Company of *Peasants*, that
 “ understand little more than what is within the Compass of their
 “ *Mattock, Plough and Shovel*, should take upon them to judge of the
 “ *Rights of their Prince*, and make an Estimate of the *Measure of Of-*
 “ *fences*, committed against the *Majesty and Dignity of Government*,
 “ how competent Judges would we think them? And will we not
 “ acknowledge the most *refin'd humane Understanding* as incompetent
 “ to judge of the *Rights of the divine Government*? Or measure the
 “ Injuriousness of the *Offence* done against it, as the *meanest Peasant* to
 “ make an Estimate of these Matters in a *humane Government*? If
 “ only the *Reputation* be wrong'd of a Person of a *better Quality*, how
 “ strictly is it insisted on, to have the Matter try'd by his *Peers*, or
 “ Persons of an *equal Rank*, such as are capable of understanding
 “ Honour and Reputation! How would it be resented, that an Affront
 “ put upon a *Nobleman*, should be committed to the Judgment of
 “ *Smiths and Coblers*, especially if they were *Participes Criminis*, and as
 “ well *Parties as Judges*?

“ When the *Regalia* of the great *Ruler and Lord* of Heaven and
 “ Earth are *invaded*, his *Temple violated*, his *Presence despis'd*, his Image
 “ *torn down* thence and *defac'd*: Who among the Sons of Men are
 “ either *great*, or *knowing*, or *innocent* enough to judge of the *Offence*
 “ and Wrong? Or how *fit it is*, that it be remitted without *Recom-*
 “ *pence*? Or what *Recompence* would be proportionable? How sup-
 “ *posable* is it, That there may be *Congruities in this Matter*, obvious
 “ to the *divine Understanding*, which infinitely exceed the Measure of
 “ ours.

From what has been said, it is easy to understand the Importance
 of the Case. All Mankind are involv'd in Sin, lie under this dreadful
 Guilt, and that not in one, but in many Instances. Now if they are
 not sure that it may be remov'd, and know not in what Way this is
 to be done; they must either not take up the Case, or they must be
 under continual Disquietments, dread the Issue, and fear divine Resent-
 ments.

ments. They can never expect any Rewards for Obedience, and consequently they must languish in it, and so all Religion that can be available is lost.

S E C T. II.

Shewing the Darkeness of Nature's Light as to Pardon.

THE Importance of the Case being thus cleared, we now proceed to demonstrate the *Insufficiency of Nature's Light* to help out of this Strait. And that we may without Fear assert it so, is evident from the ensuing Considerations;

I. *That Light* which fail'd Men so far, as to a Discovery of the Strait, is not likely to help them out of it. If we understand not where the Difficulty lies, and how great it is, we are never likely to solve it. Now it is undeniable, that a great Part of the World understood not the *Evil of Sin*, or of how vast a Consequence it was, to be assur'd about the *Pardon* of it. The prevalent Darkeness of their Minds about the *Nature, Holiness* and *Justice* of the *Deity*; their own *Natures* and *Relation* to him; their *Ignorance* of the *Nature of Sin*; the Commonness of it in the World; their strong Inclinations to it, and other Things of a like Nature, kept them from apprehending the Difficulty of the Case. But above all, the best *Moralists* amongst the *Philosophers*, such as *Socrates* and *Plato* seem'd utterly unconcern'd. And the Reason is plain, their *Pride* blinded them so, that they idoliz'd their own *Vertues*, and made no reck'ning of their *Sins*.

II. They who had a little more Concern about *Sin*, saw somewhat of the Difficulty of this Matter, but found themselves at a Loss what Way to relieve themselves: and therefore they had Recourse, some to *Philosophy, Musick* and *Mathematicks*, for the Purgation of their Souls; and others to *Lustrations, Sacrifices* and *diverse Washings*, and I do not know what other Fancies, which had no Manner of Foundation in Reason, no Suitableness to the *Nature* of the Difficulty, no *divine Warrant*, and therefore were never able to satisfy the Conscience, as to the Sinner's Acceptance with GOD, and the Removal of the Guilt. These being only the Productions of their own Imaginations, notwithstanding of all these, their Fears continu'd, and they remain'd under

Appre-

Apprehensions that even *Death* should not terminate their Miseries, as *Lucretius* himself sings,

——— *At Mens sibi conscia Facti,
Præmetuens adhibet Stimulos, terretque Flagellis,
Nec videt interea, qui Terminus esse Malorum
Possit, nec qui sit Pœnarum denique Finis,
Atque eadem metuit magis hæc in Morte gravescant.*

III. They who either thought somewhat deeper of the Case, or at least, seem'd to do so, especially at Times when the Impressions they had of *divine Justice*, were quickned by some *terrible Plagues* or *Judgments*, had Recourse to Things that were so far from relieving, that they really increas'd the Guilt, I mean that abominable Custom of *humane Sacrifices*. This cruel Custom, universally almost, obtain'd in the World, if we may believe either profane or sacred Records; of which *Dr. Owen* in his Treatise of *vindictive Justice*, gives many Instances. They not only sacrificed Men, but even Multitudes of them. The Instances of this Kind in the sacred Records

are known. As to others, *Ditmarus* quoted by *Dr. Owen de Justitia vindicatrice, Cap. 4. Page 69.* *Dr. Owen* tells us, "That the *Normans* and *Danes*, every Year in the Month of *January*

"did sacrifice to their Gods 99 Men, as many
"Horse, Dogs and Cocks. *Clemens Alexandrinus* quoted by the same Author, tell us what the Usage of the Nations in this Matter was, and on what Occasions. "*Jam vero cum Civita-*

"*tes & Gentes tanquam Pestes invasissent, sæva* Ibid. Pag. 76, 77.
"*postularunt Libamina; & Aristomenes quidem*

"*Messenius, Ithometæ Jovi, Trecentos mactavit, se tot & tales rite*
"*sacrificare existimans, in quibus etiam Theompompus Rex Lacedæmo-*
"*num erat, præclara Victima. Tauri autem Populi, qui habitabant circa*
"*Tauricam Chersonesum, quoscunque Hospites apud se cæperint, Dianæ*
"*Tauricæ eos statim sacrificant (inde inhospitalia Littora.) Hæc tua*
"*Sacrificia Euripides in Scena tragice decantat.* Here are no less than

three Hundred sacrificed at once, and among them a King. Here are Strangers sacrific'd. And any one that will read there, will find how usual it was to sacrifice their Children and nearest Relations. The Custom is barbarous, and fully speaks out the Despair of Men awakned to a serious Consideration of *Sin*, and the Darknes of *Nature's Light*.

If

If it could have pointed to any other Thing that could quiet the Conscience, civiliz'd Nations, such as those among whom this Custom did prevail, would never have had Recourse to it.

IV. 'Tis no Wonder that Men should be brought to such Straits; for they wanted the Knowledge of many Things, that were of absolute Necessity to make them once so much as understand what a Case they were in. They knew not, nor, as has been proven, could they know the *Rise of Sin*, and therefore could not know what Estimate to make of it, nor what GOD would make of it. They knew neither the Extent of the *Mercy* nor *Justice* of GOD, without which it was impossible to determine in the Case.

V. The Questions that must be resolv'd before the Mind of a Sinner, that once understands his State, can be satisfied, are so many, so intricate, and so palpably above the Reach of *uninlightned Reason*, that its foolish to pretend that *Nature's Light* will or can satisfy the Mind of any Man in the Case. Men may pretend what they will, who either do not take up the Case, or who are otherwise themselves satisfy'd by *divine Revelation*; but they who seriously, and without Partiality or Prejudice view the Case, will have other Thoughts. Who will give me rational Satisfaction as to those and the like Questions? Whether, considering the *Greatness* of *Sin*, the *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Holiness* of GOD, and the Honour of his *Government*, it is consistent to pardon any *Sin*? If it be, whether he will pardon all, many or few Sins? What, or what Degrees of Sin he will forgive? Whether he will pardon without any Reparation for the Honour of his *Laws* or not? Upon what *Terms* he will do it? If he require Reparation, what *Reparation*, and by *whom* is it to be perform'd? How shall we know that he has *pardoned*? If he pardon, whether will he remit all *Punishment* due to *Sin*, or how much? Whether will he *meerly* pardon, or will he *over and above* re-admit the Sinner to *Grace*, and as *intire Favour* as before he sinn'd? Whether will he not only pardon, but *reward* the Sinner's *imperfect Obedience*? Unless all of these are resolv'd, the Difficulty is not loos'd. And who will undertake to resolve them and give *rational Satisfaction* that understands the Case.

VI. These Questions are not only above the Reach of *Man*; but they belong not to him to judge and decide them. The Offence is committed against GOD. He alone understands what the Contempt of his *Authority*, the Disorder brought into his *Government* by *Sin*, and the *Disobedience* of his Creature amounts unto: What is fit to be done

done in the Case, he alone is Judge, at his Tribunal it is to be try'd. Man is too ignorant, too guilty, and too partial in his own Favours to be allow'd to judge. Now where are the Decisions of GOD in the Case to be found? Are they legible in the *Works of Creation*, or *Providence*, or *Consciences of Men*? In the *Works of Creation* it cannot be pretended. The *Works of Providence* afford innumerable Instances of his *Justice*, some of his *forbearing Sinners*, even while they continue in their Sin, and loading them without outward Effects of his Bounty: But where is the Sinner, of whom we can say, *GOD has forgiven him*? Or said that *he will forgive*? The *Consciences of Men* read them sometimes *sad Lectures of Justice*; but never, if they be not inform'd from *Revelation*, any of *Forgiveness*.

VII. All the Pretences that are offer'd for *Relief* in this Case, are absurd, vain and insignificant. They are all reducible to this one Head, *That GOD is infinitely merciful*; but this gives not the least Relief. For,

1. I ask, Must GOD then of necessity exercise *Mercy*, or is the *Egress* and *Exercise* of this *Mercy* necessary? If it is not, but it still remains arbitrary, and in the Pleasure of GOD whether he will *pardon* or not; then I enquire, Where is the Relief pretended? Does it not all evanish? Are we not as much at a Loss as before, whether he will pardon, or how far, or upon what Terms? If it is necessary in its *Egress*, then I enquire, How is this reconcileable with the Notion of *Mercy*, that seems to respect voluntary and undeserv'd Acts of Favour shown to them, to whom GOD was not oblig'd to shew any? How is this reconcileable to or consistent with *Justice*, which is exercis'd in punishing Sinners? By what Arguments can this be made appear? Whence is it that there are so many Acts of *Justice*, and no Instances known to, or knowable by the *Light of Nature*, of GOD's having pardon'd any?

2. *Mercy* is either unlimited in it's *Egress* or it is not. If it is limited and cannot be exercis'd, but upon such and such Provisos as make the Exercise of it consistent with GOD's Aversion to Sin, and with the Regard he has for the *Authority* of his *Laws*, the Concern he has for the *Honour* of his *Government*, and his *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, then we are where we were before: For who can tell whether it be consistent with these Things to pardon? In what Case and upon what Provisos: If it is not limited to any such Qualifications, then I desire to know, how this is reconcileable to his *Nature*? How is

such *Mercy* consistent with any Exercise of *Justice* at all? What Account can be given of the direful Effects of *Justice*, whereof the World is full? By what Means can it be reconcil'd to the *Holiness* of GOD's Nature to pardon impenitent Sinners? What need is there for any to guard against *Sin*, since upon this Supposition, *all Sin shall be forgiven*?

3. Is *infinite Mercy universal* in its Extent? If it is not, then I desire to know, what Sins, what Sinners shall be pardon'd? How shall any know whether his Sins are the Sins that are to be pardon'd? If it is universal in its Extent, and all Sins must be pardon'd; then is there not a Door open'd for *all Sin*? How can this be proven? Why have we no Evidence of this in GOD's providential Dealings? * Whence have we so many Evidences of the contrary? If it is said that *Mercy* must in more or less be exercis'd toward all, then I enquire, Who tells so? How far shall it be exercis'd? Will it pardon all or part? Upon what Terms? Will it not only *pardon*, but *remunerate* the Guilty?

4. I enquire who are the proper Objects of *Mercy*? Or what is requisite to constitute the proper Object of it? Amongst Men, the proper Object of that *Mercy*, which belongs to Governours is not *Sin* and *Misery*. To spare and pardon upon this Score only, is a plain Vice in Men especially in Governours. But the Object of *Mercy* is *such Sin* and *Misery*, as is consistent with the Honour and Good of the Governour, Government and the Governed to pardon. Now, if it be thus in this Case, then I see Nothing, but we are where we were, and are plung'd in all our former Difficulties, And why it should not be thus, I see no Reason. For there is no Man who knows what GOD is, what *Sin* is, what *Justice* is, that will say it is consistent with the *Honour, Justice, Wisdom* and *Holiness* of GOD to pardon impenitent Sinners, going on in their Sins. And when they say, That his *Mercy* only requires him to pardon penitent Sinners, then this plainly says, That the Exercise of his *Mercy* is confin'd to those who are its proper Objects, that is not to *miserable Sinners*, for the Impenitent are most so; but to those whom he may spare, in a Decorum to his Government and Congruity to his other Perfections. And indeed this is what cannot in Reason be denied: And when it is granted, then it remains a Question, not yet decided, nor indeed determinable by Reason, whether *Repentance alone* is sufficient to this Purpose.

5. The Case of *Justice* and *Mercy* are quite different as to their Egress: For *Justice* has Respect to a *fixed Rule*, an *universal Rule*, and requires that Regard be had to it, in dealing with all that are under
that

that Rule : Whereas Mercy only is conversant about particular Instances, according to the Wisdom and Pleasure of him in whom it resides.

6. The Infiniteness of either of these Attributes, neither requires nor admits, That there be infinite Numbers of Instances of either : but that the Acts of *Justice* and *Mercy* be such as becomes the infinite Nature of GOD, when it's proper to exercise them, or when the *Wisdom, Holiness, Justice* or *Mercy* of GOD requires that they be exercised.

But the *Deists* object, 1. *That upon Supposition that GOD will not pardon Sin, there is no Use of his Mercy.* I answer, We do not say he will not pardon Sin; but we say, *Nature's Light* cannot tell whether he will pardon it or not, or what is the Case wherein Mercy takes Place. We own its Use, but we say, *Nature's Light* cannot tell when and how it is proper to exercise it.

Again, 'tis pretended, *That GOD is infinitely merciful, then he must as the least of its Operations pardon the greatest of Sins.* This is plainly deny'd, and we have told wherefore above. *Ibid.*

It is further pretended, *That Justice has done its Business, when it has condemn'd the Sinner, and then Mercy brings him off:* But this is gross Ignorance. It belongs as much to *Justice* to take Care its Sentence be execute, as to see it pass. *Ibid.*

Again, its urg'd, *That tho' GOD be infinitely Just as well as Merciful, yet his Justice is only as inherent, not as extensive as his Mercy toward us:* *A. W. in his Letter, Oracles of Reas.* For we are punished only according to our Deservings, but Mercy is shown us above our Deservings. The first Part is false. The very contrary Assertion, viz. That *Justice* is more extensive, is true, as has been clear'd above, if we respect the Number of Objects. The Proof of it is a plain Sophism. For 1. It is not true that *Mercy* bestows its Effects, which in their Nature are above our Deservings, to mo Persons than *Justice* gives its Effects, which are according to Desert. 2. The Effects of *Mercy* are not more above deserving, than the Effects of *Justice* are according to it. 3. The Effects of *Justice* are with infinite Exactness proportion'd to Deservings. And all that can be said is, That the Effects of Mercy are suited to the Nature of infinite

finite Mercy, not that they are given to infinite Number of Persons, or infinite Degrees.

Further, it is pretended, *That GOD with whom*
 Blount *Relig. Laici*, *we have to do, is a Father who will not animad-*
 Pag. 69. *vert severely upon his penitent Son.* I answer, As

Herbert *de Relig.* he is a *Father*, so he is a *righteous Judge*. Fur-
 Gent. Pag. 199. *ther, tho' he be a Father, yet he is not such a*

Father as Men are, infirm, liable to Failings, that needs his Children, that may give them Occasion or Temptation to offend, that is of the same Nature with them. And hence no firm Argument can be inferr'd from any Thing that is known in this Matter by the *Light of Nature*. Besides, the meanest Offence against GOD is more Atrocious, than the greatest Offence against one's *natural Father*. For which nevertheless there is no Forgiveness, but Punishment without Mercy, by the Law of Nations and Nature.

Finally, All these are but Generals, that may well raise Suspicions in the Minds of Men; but can never give particular Satisfaction to any one Man, as to his Case, or any one of the particular Difficulties that have been mention'd. They no more satisfy, than those Notions that generally prevail'd, of the *Placability* of the Deity, which had their *Rise* at first from *Revelation*, were continu'd by the Necessity of Sinners, who having Challenges for Sin, behoov'd to take Sanctuary some where, and handed down by *Tradition*: But being general, and leaving Men at a Loss about the Means of attoning the Deity, were really of no Use, if not to keep Men from running into downright Despair, and keep them up in an Attendance upon somewhat that look'd like *Religion*; but wherein the Minds of such as really understood any Thing of the Case, could never find Satisfaction.

There is only one Thing that seems of any Moment, that is objected to all this; and that is, That *Nature's Light* which discovers the Sore, discovers a Salve for it, to wit, *Repentance*. To this we shall answer in the following Section, that's peculiarly design'd to consider this.

S E C T. III.

Wherein its enquir'd whether Repentance is sufficient to atone for Sin, how far Nature's Light enables to it, what Assurance Nature's Light gives of Pardon upon Repentance.

IT now remains that we consider the only Exception, which is of Moment, and that is, *That Repentance is a sufficient Attonement*, that Nature's Light discovers this, and so we are not left without Relief. This is the more considerable that several Christians, yea Divines of great Note, and some of them deservedly of high Esteem, have seen meet, in Compliance with their several Hypotheses in Divinity, to drop Assertions that seem to favour this. We shall first propose their Opinions, who assert this, and then consider it.

The Deists go all this Way as one Man. I shall offer one for all, and it is *Charles Blount*, who not only speaks the Sense, but translates the very Words of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*. He tells us then, " That Repentance is the only *Religio Laici*, known and publick Means, which on our Part P. 68. 69, 70.

" is required for satisfying the Divine Justice,
 " and returning to the right Way of serving GOD. And for clearing
 " this, he premits to it these ensuing Considerations, 1. That he that
 " judgeth Man is his *Father*, and doth look on him as a frail Creature,
 " obnoxious to Sin. 2. That he generally finds Men Sin, rather out
 " of Frailty, than out of any Desire to offend his Divine Majesty.
 " 3. That if Man had been made inwardly prone to Sin, and yet
 " destitute of all inward Means to return to him again, he had been
 " not only remediless in himself, but more miserable, than it could be
 " suppos'd an *infinite Goodness* did at first create, and doth still per-
 " petuate humane Kind. 4. That Man can do no more on his Part,
 " for the satisfying of *Divine Justice*, than to be heartily sorry and
 " repent him of his Sins, as well as to endeavour, through his Grace,
 " to return to the right Way, from which through his Transgression,
 " he had err'd: Or if this did not suffice for the making of his Peace,
 " that the supreme GOD, by inflicting some temporal Punishment in
 " this

“ this Life, might satisfy his own Justice. 5. That if temporal
 “ Punishment in this Life, were too little for the Sin committed, he
 “ might yet inflict a greater Punishment hereafter in the other Life,
 “ without giving eternal Damnation to those, who (if not for the
 “ Love of *Goodness*) yet, at least, upon Sense of Punishment, would
 “ not sin eternally. Notwithstanding, since these Things may again
 “ be controverted, I shall insist only upon that
 “ universally acknowledg’d Proposition first laid down. This Proposition with the Explications
 Herbert *de Relig. Gentil.* P. 199.
 he translates from *Herbert*, only has made some
 small Additions.

It is no wonder to see those speak so; but it is a little more odd to
 hear *Christians* talk so. One who would seem very zealous for Christi-
 anity tells us, “ That the GOD of Patience
 Lock’s *Reasonable-ness of Christianity*, P. 255, 256. “ and Consolation, who is rich in Mercy, would
 “ forgive his frail Off-spring, if they acknow-
 “ ledge their Faults, disapproved the Iniquity
 “ of their Transgressions, beg’d his Pardon, and
 “ resolv’d in earnest to conform their Actions to this Rule, which they
 “ own’d to be just and right: This Way of Reconciliation, this Hope
 “ of Attonement, the *Light of Nature* reveal’d to them.— He that
 “ made Use of this Candle of the LORD, (*viz.* Reason) so far as to find
 “ his Duty, could not miss to find also the Way to Reconciliation and
 “ Forgiveness, when he had fail’d of his Duty. Much more speaks
 he to the same Purpose.

But it is stranger to hear *Divines* speak so. And yet we find one
 telling us, “ That the same Light of Nature,
 Mr. Humfrey’s *Peaceable Disquisitions*, Chap. 14. P. 57. “ which declares to us our Duty, dictates to us,
 “ when we have fail’d in that Duty, to repent
 “ and turn to GOD with trusting to his Mercy
 “ and Pardon, if we do so and not else. We do
 “ find it legible in our Hearts, that GOD is good and wisely gracious
 “ to pity our Infirmities, to consider our lost Estate, and necessary
 “ Frailty, as that there is a GOD, and any Worship that is at all due
 “ to him.

To the same Purpose the learn’d *Baxter* speaks in his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part 1. Chap. 17. Dr. *Whichcot* in his Sermon *Acts* 13. 38. and others too large to quote.

But

But now, with all due Deference to those great Names, I shall take Leave to offer the following Remarks, wherein I shall clear my own Mind, and offer the Reasons on which I dissent from them.

I. I observe that the *Deists* speak more uncertainly about this Matter; whereas these *Christian Writers* seem more positive. The *Deists* seem not to want their Fears that *Repentance* may not serve the Turn, and therefore they seem willing to admit of *temporal Punishments*, and even *Punishments after Time*, only they have not will to think of *eternal Punishments*; as we heard from *Herbert* and *Blount*, who both speak in the same Words on this Head. But the *Christian Writers* are positive: And I am jealous the Reason is not, that they saw farther into the *Light of Nature*, than the *Deists*; but that they lean more firmly to the *Scripture Revelation*, which assures us that *penitent Sinners shall be forgiven*. Tho' I must add, the *Scripture* no where says that penitent Sinners shall be forgiven upon their *Penitence*, as that, *which is sufficient to atone the Justice of GOD*. And to speak plainly, however confident those worthy Persons are, that they have read this Doctrine in the *Book of Nature*, I dare be bold to affirm that they had either fail'd in the Discovery, or stammer'd a little more in reading their Lesson, if they had not learn'd it before Hand out of the *Book of the Scriptures*; tho' the Thing seems, when they have read it there, to approve it self so much to *Reason*, that *Reason* cannot but assent to it. It is well observ'd by one of those Authors, with whom we now manage this Debate, "That when Lock *Reasonable-*
 " Truths are once known to us, tho' by *Tradition*, *ness of Christianity*,
 " we are apt to be favourable to our own Parts, P. 279, 280, 281.
 " and ascribe to our own Understanding the
 " Discovery of what, in Truth we borrowed from others; or, at least,
 " finding we can prove, what at first we learn'd from others, we are
 " forward to conclude it an obvious Truth, which, if we had sought,
 " we could not have miss'd. Nothing seems hard to our Understandings,
 " that is once known; and because what we see with our own Eyes,
 " we are apt to overlook or forget the Help we had from others, who
 " first shew'd and pointed it out to us, as if we were not at all beholden
 " to them for that Knowledge; for Knowledge being only of known
 " Truths; we conclude our Faculties would have led us into it with-
 " out any Assistance; and that we know these Truths by the Strength
 " and native Light of our own Minds, as they did, from whom we
 " receiv'd them by theirs, only they had the Luck to be before us.
 " Thus

“ Thus the whole Stock of humane Knowledge is claim’d by every
 “ one, as his private Possession, as soon as he (profiting by others
 “ Discoveries) has got it into his own Mind ; and so it is : But not
 “ properly by his own single Industry, nor of his own Acquisition.
 “ He studies, it’s true, and takes Pains to make a Progress in what
 “ others have delivered, but their Pains were of another Sort, who
 “ first brought those Truths to Light, which he afterwards derives
 “ from them. He that travels the Roads now, applauds his own
 “ Strength and Legs, that have carry’d him so far, in such a scantling
 “ of Time, and ascribes all to his own Vigour, little considering how
 “ much he owes to their Pains, who clear’d the Woods, drain’d the
 “ Bogs, built the Bridges, and made the Ways passable ; without
 “ which he might have toil’d much with little Progress. A great
 “ many Things which we have been bred in the Belief of from our
 “ Cradles, (and are Notions grown familiar, and as it were natural to
 “ us under the Gospel) we take for unquestionable obvious Truths,
 “ and easily demonstrable, without considering how long we might
 “ have been in Doubt, or Ignorance of them, had *Revelation* been
 “ silent. ’Tis no diminishing to *Revelation*, that *Reason* gives its
 “ Suffrage too to the Truths *Revelation* hath discover’d. But ’tis our
 “ Mistake to think that because *Reason* confirms them to us, we
 “ had the first certain Knowledge of them from thence, and in that
 “ clear Evidence we now possess them. How applicable this excellent
 Discourse is to the Case in Hand, will appear from what we design to
 subjoin on this Head. Tho’ after all, that which the *Scripture* delivers,
 and *Reason* confirms in this Case, is not, *That Repentance is sufficient to*
atone the Justice of GOD, or that GOD will pardon a penitent Sinner,
merely on Account of his Penitence, which the *Deists* Case requires. The
Scriptures plainly teach the contrary, and those learn’d Persons, or
 some of them at least who own them, believe according to the *Scriptures*,
 the contrary, which makes a considerable Difference betwixt
 them and the *Deists* ; tho’ in this Case, they seem to speak the same
 Things. But that which *Scripture* asserts, is, *That Penitence is a Qua-*
lification suitable to a Sinner to be pardoned, and that it’s not suitable to the
Wisdom and Justice of GOD to pardon one, who is not sorry for former
Offences, and resolves to obey for the future. Reason confirms this indeed,
 but ’tis not to the Purpose.

II. But to come a little more close to the Purpose ; *This Repentance,*
 which is pretended *sufficient*, consists of two Parts, *Sorrow for the*
Offence,

Offence, and a *Return to Obedience*. This last Part, a *Return to Obedience*, what is it? Nothing, but only a Performance of the Duties we were antecedently bound unto by the *Law of Creation*, which only receives a new Denomination from it's Relation to an *antecedent Deviation*, or *Sin*. This Denomination adds no new Worth to it, nor does the Relation whereon its founded. Wherefore we can never reasonably suppose, that there is any great Matter in this, that can atone for the Transgression. It's well if it obtains Approbation as a Part of our Duty. But no reasonable Man can pretend that it atones for any Part of our Sin.

III. Tho' *Nature's Light* discovers our Obligation to that Duty, which now, because Sin preceeded, must be call'd a *Return*; yet it is a Question, if *Nature's Light* is able to bring a Sinner, that has once gone away, to such a *Return* as is necessary. For 1. We have above prov'd that *Nature's Light* is defective as to *Motives to Obedience*, as to the Discovery of particular Duties, and much more is it defective as to *Motives to a Return*: Because there is more requir'd to encourage a Sinner to come back, who has once offended, than to engage him to continue. There is a Discouragement arising from Fear of Punishment, and falling short of any Reward he might have expected upon the Account of his Sin to be removed, and that is not easily done, as shall be shown. 2. Besides, not only Discouragements ly in the Way of a *Return*, but cross Inclinations, Aversions from Duty, and Inclinations to Sin. Now I am not satisfy'd that *Nature's Light* can remove, or direct how to remove these; of which we may speak more fully in the next Chapter. So that as for this Part of *Repentance*, we neither see of what Use it is as to Attonement, nor do we find it clear that *Nature's Light* can bring any to it.

IV. The Stress of the Business then must lean on this *Sorrow* for bygone Transgressions, that is the other Part of the Composition. But here I am sure it will be readily granted, that every Sort of *Sorrow* for Sin will not serve. If one is only griev'd for the Loss he has sustain'd, the Hazard he has run himself into, and the Evil he has to suffer, or Fears, at least, for his Offence; this can be available to no Man. Wherefore tho' *Nature's Light* may bring a Man to this and has oft done it, yet this signifies nothing in the Case.

V. The *Sorrow*, that only can be pretended, is that which arises purely, or at least, principally from Concern for the *Dishonour done to GOD*. Now as to this *Sorrow*, it is to be observed, That it is not any
S
Action

Action of ours done in Obedience to any Command: But it is a *Passion*, in its own *Nature uneasy*, as all Sorrow is, tho' suitable to a Sinner, and, upon the Supposition, that he is so, useful perhaps. And it results from the joint Influence of prevailing Love to GOD, his Law and Authority, and a clear Conviction of Sin's having injur'd his Honour, and our being, on this Account, obnoxious.

VI. It is not easily to be granted that *Nature's Light* can bring any Man to *this Sorrow*. Since 1. It is evident that the Temper Men are naturally of, is quite contrary to that which gives Rise to such a *Sorrow*. We are naturally averse from GOD, as shall be made appear afterwards, and are not under the Influence of any such prevalent Love to him, and it's not easy to prove that *Nature's Light* is able to remove this *natural Aversion of the Heart* from GOD: But of this more in the next Chapter. 2. GOD can never appear amiable to a Sinner, if he is not reveal'd as one ready to forgive. We cannot be sorrowful for our Sin, if we are not seriously convinc'd that we have sinn'd, and see the Demerit of Sin. If we are convinc'd that we have sinn'd, and deserve Punishment, we cannot have prevalent Love to GOD, which is requisite to give Life to this Sorrow, make it run in the right Channel, and proceed on those Accounts, which will make it acceptable to GOD, or available to us, unless he appear to us as ready to forgive, which *Nature's Light* doth not discover.

VII. I doubt if *Nature's Light* calls us to *Repentance*. I allow that there are several things obvious to *Nature's Light*, which may be said to drive us to *Repentance*, because they serve to discover to us these Things whereon *this Sorrow* follows, bind the Obligation on us to that Duty, which because of the preceeding Sin, is called a *Return*, and serve as Arguments to enforce a Compliance, provided we had a *Call* or Invitation to return, I mean a *New Call*. For clearing this, we are to observe that, Were Man innocent and guilty of no Fault, and had his Obedience no Imperfection necessarily cleaving to it, and were he under no such Inconveniency as might make him dread Wrath, or fear his Obedience might be rejected; in that Case a Discovery of the Obligation he lies under to Duty, were a *Call* and *Invitation* sufficient as securing him, at least as to the Acceptance of his Duty. But where there are those Things in his Case, *Sin* and *Imperfection* cleaving to the Duty, and the Performer chargeable with *Guilt* on both those Accounts, in Order to engage him to Duty, there is requisite a *New Call* or *Invitation*, securing him against those Grounds of Fear, and giving him Ground

to expect Acceptance. Now it is such a *Call* as this, that only can bring the Sinner to Repentance. And this we deny that *Nature's Light* gives; tho' we owne that it discovers many Things, that may be said in some Sense, to lead to *Repentance*: Because, upon Supposition of such an Invitation, they are improveable as Arguments to enforce Compliance with Duty. Thus, If GOD invite me back again, his *Goodness* discover'd in the *Works of Creation* and *Providence*, invites to go to him, and all the direful Evidences of his Anger against Sinners persuade the same Thing: And therefore may be said to *lead*, or rather *drive* to *Repentance*; because they have a Tendency that Way in their own Nature, and are capable of such an Improvement: But still it's only upon the foregoing Supposition.

VIII. To make this Matter yet a little more clear, I grant that *the Light of Nature* discovers sinful Man to be still under an Obligation to obey GOD. As long as GOD is GOD, and Man his Creature, Man is under a Ty to Subjection, and GOD has a Right to Man's Obedience: This Obedience to which Man is bound, after once he has sinn'd, must be call'd a *Return*. Further, the *Light of Nature* teaches, That if Man had yielded perfect Obedience, he should not have done it in vain. Acceptance, at least, he should have had, and what other *Reward* the *Goodness* of GOD thought meet. And that Man sustains a great Loss by *Sin*, that interveens betwixt him and his Expectations from the *Goodness* of GOD, and besides, exposes him to the Hazard of his just Resentments, which, if it is seen, as by *Nature's Light* in some Measure, it may be, will occasion *Sorrow*. Further *Nature's Light* will teach that the more deeply we *Sin*, the more we have to fear, and therefore out of *Fear* and a *Regard* to our own Interest and Expectation of being freed from those severer Judgments, which a Progress in Sin draw on Men, may be induc'd to *return*. Now all this *Nature's Light* discovers, but neither is this *Sorrow*, which favours of some *Regard* to our selves, but of little or none to GOD; nor *this Return*, which is not that chearful, cordial Obedience that GOD requires and accepts, of any Avail in the Case. No Man, that knows what he says, will pretend, that such a *Sorrow* or such a *Return* is *sufficient* to atone the *Justice* of GOD for bygones, or even obtain *Acceptance* for it self, which has so much of Love to Self, and so little of that which respects GOD.

IX. But *the Repentance* that is available in this Case is a *Sorrow*, flowing from *prevalent Love* to GOD, and grieving, if not *only*, yet *principally*

principally for the *Wrong done to GOD*, and a chearful following of Duty upon Prospect of GOD's being a *Rewarder* of it. Now to *call* or to make up a *sufficient Invitation* to a Sinner, to such a *Repentance*, it's requisite that GOD 1. be represented in such a Way, as a Sinner that sees himself guilty, can love him, delight in him, and draw near to him. But this he can never be, if he is not represented as *One with whom certainly there is Forgiveness*. 2. It requires further, that GOD be represented as One, who will accept of Sinners *Obedience*, notwithstanding of their Desert of *Wrath* for former *Disobedience*, and this requires still that he be a GOD that forgives. 3. Further, it's requisite, that he be represented as One, that will accept of *Obedience*, not only from one that has *sinn'd*, but that implies *Sin* and *Imperfection* in it. Now this cannot be, if he is not known to be one that is *plenteous in Mercy and will abundantly pardon*. Now I say the *Light of Nature* gives no such Discovery of GOD: And therefore gives no *Call* or *sufficient Invitation* to this *Repentance*.

X. Nor will it help out here, to say, That the *Light of Nature* doth represent GOD as *placable*, one who may be *pacify'd*: For, should I grant that it does so, yet this cannot invite to such an *Obedience*, so long as 1. It's left a Question, Whether he be actually reconcil'd, or positively determin'd to forgive? 2. Especially considering, that he has not pointed to, and positively declar'd on what Terms he will be appeas'd. Yea 3. Since moreover he has given no visible Instance, knowable by the *Light of Nature*, that he *has forgiven* any particular Person. But 4. On the contrary, the World is full of the most terrible Effects of his Displeasure, and these falling most heavily on the Best, even those who go farthest in a Compliance with Duty. In a Word, these dark Notions of a *placable GOD*, which yet is the utmost that *unenlightned Reason* can pretend to, are utterly insufficient to bring any of the Children of Men to that *Repentance* we are now in Quest of; 'tis so sunk, and as it were quite obscur'd by cross Appearances. And all that can reasonably be said, is, That in the Providence of GOD there is such a seeming Contrariety of *Good* and *Evil*, that Men know not what to make of it, but are toss'd by contrary Appearances. And of this we have a fair Acknowledgment by one, who, besides that he was a Person of great Learning, was not only a great Stickler for the natural Discoveries of this *Placability*, but one of the first Broachers of it, being led to it by the peculiar Hypotheses he maintain'd and advanc'd in Divinity, I mean the learn'd *Amyrald*. After he has assert-
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ed the *natural Discoveries* of this *Placability*, and alledg'd that they lead to *Repentance*, yet subjoins, "But there are
 " (says he) *Motions* in the corrupt Nature of Man which frustrate the Effect, if GOD did not provide for it in another Manner (that is by Revelation.) For Man flees from the Presence of GOD through Fear of Punishment, and cannot hinder the Prevalence of it in his Soul; so that as a Man affrighted beholds Nothing stedfastly, but always imagines new Occasions of Terror, and represents hideous Phantasms to himself; so we are not able to allow our selves Leisure to consider attentively this Dispensation of the Goodness of GOD towards the Wicked, nor thereby to assure our selves of obtaining Mercy and Pardon. As a lewd Wretch, whose Conscience bears him Witness of many heinous Crimes, tho' he should perceive some Connivance in the Magistrate for a Time, and his Judge shew him some good Countenance, cannot but be distrustful of him, and suspect that he does but defer his Punishment to another Time, and assuredly reserve it for him; especially if he hath an Opinion that the Magistrate is not such an one as himself, but abhors the Wickednesses committed by him. Now we are universally thus principled, That as we have those whom we fear, so we never bear good Will toward them of whom we have some Diffidence. And the Distrusting the good Will of any one being a Step to Fear, is likewise, by the same Reason, a Degree to Hatred; unless the Distrust proceed to such a Measure as to be an absolute Fear; for then the Coldness of Affection is turned into perfect Hatred. Wherefore Man thus distrusting the good Will of GOD towards him, consequently can have but a very slight Affection to him; yea, he will even become his Enemy, in as much as the Distrust in this Case will be extremely great. Thus far he. Now methinks this quite overthrows the *Placability* he had before asserted, discoverable by *Nature's Light*, at least, as to any Use it can be suppos'd of, for assuring Sinners of *Pardon*, or inviting them to *Repentance*.

XI. But to go a Step further, I cannot see that the *Light of Nature* is able to give us any Assurance of this *Placability*. Where is it in the *Book of Nature* that we may read this Truth that *God is placable*? Is it in the *Works of Creation*? No, this is not pretended. Nor can it be, they were all absolv'd and finish'd before the Entrance of *Sin*, and cannot be suppos'd to carry on them any Impressions of *Placability* to Sinners

Amyrald of Religions, Part 2. Chap. 17. P. *mibi*, 253, 254.

Sinners: Is it in the *Works of Providence*? Yes, here it is pretended. And what is it in the *Works of Providence* that is alledg'd to evince this *Placability*? Is it that GOD spares Sinners for some Time, and not only so, but bestows many outward good Things on them, whom he spares? Yes, this is that whereon the whole Strefs of the Business is laid. But I cannot see the Force of this to assure us that GOD is *placable*. For 1. It is certain that the Nature of the Things do not infer certainly any such Thing. *Forbearance is not Forgiveness*: Nor does it intimate any Design to forgive. It may be exercis'd, where there is a certain Design and fix'd Purpose of Punishing. And what Relation have a few of those outward Things, whereby *Love or Hatred cannot be known*, unto *Peace and Reconciliation* with GOD? It is, I know, pretended, That even *this Forbearance* is a *Sort of Forgiveness*, and that all the World sharing in it, are in some Sort forgiven. So Mr. *Baxter* says. If this learn'd Person or any other have a Mind to extend the Notion of Pardon so far as to include even *Reprives* under that Name, we cannot hinder: But it is certain, That no Abatement of the Punishment, far less the Dissolution of the Obligation, which is that ordinarily meant by Pardon, do necessarily follow upon, or is included in a Delay of Punishment. The Slowness in Execution, which may proceed upon many Grounds, hid in Depth of divine Wisdom from us, may be more than compensate by its Severity when it comes. *Leaden Feet*, as some have us'd the Expression, *may be compensate by Iron Hands*. And when Men have seriously weigh'd outward good Things, which are thrown in greatest Plenty in the Lap of the most Wicked, are full of Vanity and commonly insnare. They can see but very little of any Mercy design'd them thereby. And if any Inference toward a *Placability* is deducible, which yet I profess I cannot see, I am sure that it is far above the Reach of not a few, if not most of Mankind, to make the Deduction and trace the Argument. And so it can be of no Use to them. 2. All those Things are consistent with a Sentence standing unrepeal'd and never to be repeal'd, if either *Scripture*, which tells us that GOD *exercises much Long-suffering*, and gives Plenty of good Things to the *Vessels of Wrath*; or *Reason*, which assures us that Persons continuing obstinate to the last in Sin, cannot evite Judgment, may be believ'd. 3. As there is Nothing in the Nature of the Things that can ascertain us of GOD's *Placability*, much less is there any in the Condition of the Persons, to whom this Dispensation is exercis'd. Were these bestow'd on the *most Vertuous*, or were there

an Increase of them, as Persons proceeded in *Vertue*, and came nearer and nearer to *Repentance*; or were there on the other Hand a continu'd Evidence of *Wrath* and *Implacability* towards obstinate Sinners, this then would seem to say somewhat. But all Things are quite contrary, the Worst have the most of them, and the Best have commonly least of them. What will the Sinner say, that GOD is inviting me by his *Goodness* to *Vertue*? No, if I should turn Vertuous I might rather expect to be worse dealt with. That is a bootless Way for any Thing I can see in it. Does not Scripture and Experience tell us, That thus Things go, and that such Use Sinners have made of this Dispensation? And so dark is it, that even they, who had GOD's Mind in the Word to unriddle the Mystery, have been shaken at it so far, that they have been upon the very Brink of Apostasy, while they saw the Way of Sinners prosper, and that they *who hate GOD were exalted*. How then can *unenlightned Reason* draw such Inferences as these learn'd Men pretend? Albeit I have a great Veneration for these learn'd Men; yet if it would not appear presumptuous, in one so far below in all Respects, to censure his Superiors, I would take the Liberty to say, That in this Matter they are guilty of a double Mistake; *First*, In that they measure Men's Abilities by a wrong Standard. What such Men as they may trace by *Reason*, many Men are under not only a *moral*, but even a *natural Incapacity* to discover. Its certain, besides that vast Difference which is in the Capacities of Men, from different Education and Circumstances, whence its *morally Impossible* for one who wants that Education, other Occasions and Advantages which another has, to go that same Length and trace these Discoveries, which the other who had Education and Occasion may do; there is likewise vast Difference even in the *natural Abilities* of Men (whether that arises from their *Bodies* or *Souls* I dispute not now, nor is it to the Purpose; for if from either, it is still *natural*) so that one has not a *natural Capacity* to trace the Truths that others may, who have better *natural Abilities*: And so it's naturally Impossible for the Former to make the Discoveries which the other may. And I fear not to add, That if any such Inferences may be drawn from these Premises, as those learn'd Persons pretend, yet many are under a *natural Impossibility*; and the most under *insuperable moral Incapacity* of tracing those Discoveries. And if it be allow'd that any Man, without his own Fault, is under an Incapacity of making such Deductions, about the *Placability* of GOD, from these Dispensations of Providence, which I think cannot modestly be deny'd,

deny'd, the whole Plea about *Placability* will prove no only unserviceable to the *Deists*, but, if I mistake it not, unmeet to maintain that Station for which it is design'd, in the Hypotheses of the learn'd Asserters of this Opinion. Another Mistake I think those Persons guilty of, is, That Men whose Minds are not inlightned by *Revelation*, may possibly trace those Discoveries, which they who are guided by it may read in the *Book of Nature*. 4. I add, if these Things, whereon they insist, as Discoveries of this *Placability* in GOD, serve to raise any *Suspensions* of that Sort in the Minds of Men, and this is the most that can be reasonably pretended, for Demonstration they do not amount unto, they are quite sunk by the contrary Evidences of GOD's Severity; which must have so much of more Force, in as much as they most commonly befall the *most Vertuous*, which hightens the Suspicion. And besides, as we heard *Amyrald* observe, The Minds of Sinners, who are convinc'd in any Measure of Sin, who are yet the only Persons that will think themselves concern'd in this Matter, are much more inclin'd to entertain *Suspensions* than good Thoughts of him, whom they have offended, and who, as their Consciences assure them, hates their Offences. 5. That which puts the Copestone upon our Misery, and concludes us under Darkness, is that *Nature's Light* has no Help to guide us over these Difficulties laid in our Way, from any known Instances of any Persons led to *Repentance* by these Means, or pardon'd on their *Repentance*. So that upon the Whole, I cannot see sufficient Evidence of this *Placability* in the *Light of Nature*.

XII. If it is alledg'd here, That if GOD had *no Design of Mercy* in sparing the World, it's perfectly unintelligible where he did it. In Answer to this, It's to be observ'd, That we do not say that GOD had *no Design of Mercy* in sparing the World, but that this his *Forbearance* of the World is not a sufficient Proof and Evidence of this Design; and that *Nature's Light* can give no satisfying Account of the Reason of this Dispensation of GOD. So dark was this to such as had no other Light, but that of *Reason*, that the most Part laid aside Thoughts of it as a Thing above their Reach; and the more thoughtful knew not what Judgment to make, but were confounded and perplex'd in their Thoughts. They understood not what Account was to be made of GOD's producing so many successive Generations of Men, and tossing them betwixt *Love* and *Hatred*, *Hope* and *Fear* by such a strange Mixture of *Good* and *Evil*; Effects of his *Bounty* and Evidences of his *Anger*. Yea so far were they confounded, that some of them came the

Length

Length to set GOD aside from the Government of the World. This Way the *Epicureans* went, some of them accus'd him of *Impotency*. No less a Person, than *Seneca* introduces GOD, telling good Men, That he could not help their *Calamities*. And *Pliny* accuses GOD, under the Notion of *Nature*, of no good Design, "*Naturam, quasi magna & sava Mercede contra tanta sua Munera usam; ita ut non satis sit aestimare, Parens melior Homini, an tristior Noverca fuerit; id est, Nature has so cruelly counterballanced its largest Gifts with horrible Evils, that it's hard to say, whether it is not a sad or cruel Step-mother rather than a kindly Parent to Man.* So that in Fact, Men were thus spared and left in this dark Condition, as to the Reasons of GOD's Dispensation, is evident from *Experience*. The Reasons of this Conduct are to be sought in the Depth of the *Wisdom* and *sovereign Justice* of GOD. *Christians* who are found in the Faith will own, That all who belong'd to the Election of Grace could not have come into Being, if the World had not been thus spar'd. They will own, That the World could not have been preserv'd in any Order, without these Effects both of *Bounty* and *Severity*, whereby some Restraint was put on the Lusts of Men, and some Government kept up among them, and they were kept from running to such a Height in Sin, as would have made it impossible for GOD, with any Consistency to his *Justice, Holiness* or *Wisdom* to have preserved the World, till his Design in its Preservation was reach'd. And it may be said further, for the Satisfaction of *Christians* (for the *Deists* have no Concern in this Account, which is bottom'd on the Revelation they deny) That if GOD had seen meet to make all that belong'd to *Adam's* Covenant at once, they could not have refus'd to consent to the placing their *Happiness* on that Bottom whereon he plac'd it in the Transaction with *Adam*, and could not have condemn'd GOD for executing the Sentence upon all immediately upon the Breach of it. And therefore I think they have no Reason to quarrel GOD's keeping them out of Hell for a while. Further, GOD in his *Wisdom*, by leaving so many Men in this dark Case for so many Ages, has let them see the Shortness of their *Wisdom* to disentangle them from that *Misery*, whereunto by Sin they were involv'd. It was in the *Wisdom* of GOD, that the World by *Wisdom* knew not GOD. Finally, This should make us welcome the Gospel, which only can dispel the Darknes we are under, as to the whole State of Matters betwixt GOD and us, and lead us to *Life* and *Immortality* and *Mercy*, pardoning *Mercy*, which the dim Light of *Nature* could never discover to us.

Now if we consider what has been above discours'd, it will be found that we have made considerable Advances toward Decision of that which is in Debate.

We have clear'd what *that Repentance* is, which with any Shew of Reason can be pretended available in the present Case.

We have evinc'd that the *Placability* of GOD, of which some talk, were it discoverable by *Nature's Light*, is not *sufficient* to bring Men to *this Repentance*.

Further, We have made it appear, That the Evidences of *this Placability* brought from *Nature's Light* are not concludent.

But were all this given up, which we see no Cause to do, the principal Point is still behind, *viz. Whether Nature's Light can ascertain us that all penitent Sinners shall be pardon'd upon their Repentance.* This the *Deists* maintain, and we deny. Their Assertion, *That the Light of Nature assures us that penitent Sinners upon their Repentance shall assuredly be forgiven*, is that which we shall next take under Consideration, and demonstrate to be groundless, false and absurd by the ensuing Arguments.

I. I reason against it from *the Nature of Pardon*. *Forgiveness* or *Pardon* is a *free Act* of GOD's Will. It is a freeing of the Sinner from the Obligation he lies under to Punishment, by Virtue of the penal Sanction of that righteous and just Law which he has violate. All divine Laws are unquestionably equal, just, and righteous, and their penal Sanctions are so too. Certainly therefore GOD may justly inflict the Punishment contain'd in the Sanction of the Law upon the Transgressor; and consequently, we may without Fear infer, That to relieve him from that Penalty is a *most free Act*, to which GOD was not necessarily oblig'd. And indeed, tho' all this had not been said, the Thing is in it self clear; for we can frame no other Notion of *Forgiveness* than this, *That it is a voluntary and free Act of Grace, which remits the Punishment, and looses the Sinner from that Punishment he justly deserved, and which the Law-giver might justly have inflicted on him.* Now this being clear, we subsume, That *such Acts* cannot be known otherwise than, either by *Revelation*, that is GOD's declaring himself expressly to this Purpose, or by the *Deed it self*, some *positive Act* of *Forgiveness*, which is the Effect of such a Purpose. The *Deists* disown and deny *any Revelation*. And for any Effect declarative of such a Purpose, we shall challenge the World to produce it. There never was, nor is any one Person, of whom we can certainly affirm, upon the Information

formation only of *Nature's Light*, that GOD has forgiven him, either upon *Repentance* or without it. And if there were such Persons, it would not bear the Weight of a *general Conclusion*, that GOD has done it, therefore he will do it to all, in all other Instances.

II. I reason against this suppos'd Constitution from the *Extent* of it, that GOD will pardon *all penitent Sinners*. If this is not said, he pardons none upon their *Penitence*: For if *any penitent Sinner* can be suppos'd to remain *unpardoned*, why may not all? Besides, if a *penitent Sinner* is *punished*, then it must be upon somewhat else than *Penitence*, that he who is pardon'd obtains *Remission*. For if *meer Penitence* had been sufficient, a Penitent could not have suffered. Now if all penitent Sinners are forgiven, and *Nature's Light* assures them that they shall be forgiven, then the *Extent* of this Constitution is very large. For 1. It makes void the penal Sanction of the *Law* as to *all Sins*, *however atrocious they are*, if the Sinner is only a *Penitent*. 2. It extends to all *Ages*, *Places* and *Generations* of Men, that ever have been or shall be in the World. 3. It reaches to all *Sorts* of Persons, even those who are in *Capacity* to introduce the greatest Disorders into the Government of the World, as well as the meanest Offenders. Well then, the *Deists* must maintain that it is thus enacted, and this Act or Constitution is in all this *Extent* publickly declar'd by the *Light of Nature*, so that all may know it. 4. It reaches to all *Sins*, past, present and to come; they shall all be forgiven, if the Sinner do only repent. Now against such an extensive Constitution, we offer the following Considerations;

1. All wise Governours who have any Regard to the Honour of their Laws, Authority, and Governments, use to be very sparing in indemnifying Transgression. And no wonder they should; for wise and just Rulers are not wont to enact Penalties, but in Proportion to Offences. And therefore, a passing easily from them tends to make Transgression cheap, and weaken the Constitution, and so dissolve the Government. Now GOD is no less tender of the Honour of those Laws, which enact Nothing but what is the Transcript of his own righteous Nature, and the Opposite whereof he has the deepest Abhorrency of, as contrary to the same. And can we then reasonably suppose him to be so lavish of *Forgiveness* as to establish it in so strange an *Extent*? I believe it will be hard for any thinking Man to judge so.

2. In all well ordered Governments, *Pardon* is a particular *Act* of *Grace*, restricted to some Time, Place and Person; yea and Crimes too: And therefore is never extended so universally as here it is, and if it is to the Purpose must be asserted. So that the common Reason of Mankind declares against such a Constitution: For what is or may be pretended of impenitent Sinners being excluded, is in very Deed, no Restriction of the Law indemnifying Transgressors of whatever Sort, that are but willing to be indemnified. For impenitent Sinners are they only who have no Will to be pardon'd, or who will not accept of Favour. Now to indemnify all that are willing to be pardon'd is a very odd Constitution. And before I ascribe this to the *Wisdom* of the great Ruler of the World, I must see better Reasons than I am ever like to see in this Case.

3. No wise Government ever enacted *Pardon* of such an universal Extent, without further Security for the Honour of the Government, into a perpetual and standing Law. *Pardon* and *Acts of Grace* are a Part of the *Sovereignty* of the Governour: And however he may make them very extensive sometimes; yet he always reserves it so in his own Power, that it shall afterwards be voluntary and free to him to forgive or not as he shall see Cause.

4. Such a Constitution is especially irreconcilable with *Wisdom* and *Equity*, if it is extended to Transgressions not yet committed; for in that Case it looks like an Invitation to Sin.

5. And this binds more strongly, if the Persons are strongly inclin'd to Sin.

6. More especially such a Constitution is never to be reconcil'd with *Wisdom*, if it is universally made known and publish'd without any Provision made for securing of the Honour of the Law, against any Abuse of such Grace. Now I desire to know if *Nature's Light* discovers such an *Act* and *Declaration of Grace*. Where is there any Care taken, or any Provisos insert in the Declaration that can evidence the Regard GOD has for his Laws, and secure against the Abuse of such Kindness? Indeed the Scripture Discovery of *Mercy* to penitent Sinners, on Account of *Christ's Satisfaction*, fully removes all those Difficulties which otherwise, so far as I can see, are never to be remov'd: And therefore I can never see how such a Declaration could be made without the concomitant Discovery of a *Satisfaction to Justice*, and Reparation of the Honour of the Law-giver and Law, and Security against Abuse of Grace. Remarkable to this Purpose are the Words of the learn'd
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and judicious Dr. How, " That Prince would
 " certainly never be so much *magnify'd* for his *Living Temple,*
 " Clemency, and Mercy, as he would be despis'd Part 2. P. 327.
 " by all the World, for most remarkable *Defects*
 " of Government, that should not only pardon whosoever of his Subjects
 " had offended him, upon their being sorry for it; but go about to
 " provide, a Law should obtain in his Dominions, through all after-
 " time, that whosoever should offend against the Government, with
 " whatsoever Insolency, Malignity and Frequency, if they repented,
 " they should *never be punish'd*, but be taken forthwith, into highest
 " Favour. Admit that it had been congruous to the *Wisdom* and
 " Righteousness of GOD, as well as his Goodness, to have pardon'd a
 " particular Sinner, upon Repentance, without Satisfaction; yet nothing
 " could have been more apparently unbecoming him, than to settle
 " an *universal Law* for all future Time, to that Purpose, that let as
 " many as would, in any Age to the World's End, affront him never
 " so highly, invade his Rights, trample his Authority, and tear the
 " Constitution of his Government, they should upon their Repentance
 " be forgiven, and not only not be punish'd, but be most highly ad-
 " vanc'd, and dignify'd. Thus far he. In the subsequent Paragraph
 he learnedly and judiciously shews the Difference in the Gospel Proposal
 of Mercy to Offenders, from this suppos'd Case of *Forgiveness* without
Satisfaction.

III. I enquire, Whether is it possible that there may be *any Crime so*
atrocious, that it may be possible for GOD, in a Congruity with his
 Perfections, to punish, notwithstanding of the Intervention of *Repent-*
tance? If there may be any such, then certainly it is not meerly on
 Account of *Repentance* that Sin is pardon'd: And so a Penitent cannot
 always be sure of *Forgiveness*. Further, considering how grievous and
 sinful every Transgression of GOD's Law is, how can I be sure what
 Sins are pardonable upon *Repentance*, and what not? If it is not possible
 for GOD to punish any Penitent, then 1. I would enquire what so
 great Matter is there in *Repentance*, that can bind GOD up from
vindicating his Honour against Affronts already offer'd? 2. To what
 Purpose was the *penal Sanction* since, in the Case it was design'd? For
 when the *Law* is transgress'd, it may not possibly take Place, but the
 Execution is inconsistent with the Nature of GOD. 3. How will this
Impossibility ever be proven? *Repentance* hath nothing in it so great to
 infer it: For in *Repentance* no more can be alledg'd but a *Return to*
Duty.

Duty antecedently due. And as to this, *we are unprofitable Servants*. And Christ has told us what Reason tells us also, that we deserve no Thanks for it. And as for the other Part, *Sorrow for Bygones*, it is the necessary Result of that Regard to the Deity, and Knowledge of our own Sin, that is likewise our own Duty. Now what is there, in all this, that should be suppos'd to be of so great Worth, that it must inevitably stop the Course of Justice?

But here it may be objected, not only by *Deists*, but some, who are very far from favouring them, "That GOD

Baxter *Reasons of* "cannot cast away from his Love and Felicity
Christ. Relig. Part 1. "any Soul, which truly loveth him above all,
Pag. 184, 188. "and which so repenteth of his Sin, as to return
"to GOD in Holiness and Life.

I answer, 1. The Supposition that a Sinner convinc'd of Sin can repent without some Security given as to Pardon, can love GOD above all, and so repent as to turn to Holiness in Heart and Life, appears to me impossible. Much less is it possible that an unconvinc'd Sinner can repent. The Reason is plain, a clear Conviction of Sin inevitably casts us under the deepest Fear of GOD, and Dread of Punishment from him, which not only casts out that Love, but draws on Hatred, or at least, strong Aversion; as we heard the learn'd *Amyrald* well observe in the Words before quoted. Now it is certain, that suppose *one Impossible*, twenty will follow. 2. If the Thing is not impossible, which I think it is, yet certainly it is a Case that never happen'd, and is never like to happen. 3. Supposing it possible, it is a very bold Assertion, that no Crime, how atrocious soever, would justify the inflicting of the Penalty contain'd in the righteous Sanction of the Law. 4. Much less then is it hard to suppose that it would justify GOD's denying any Reward to the Sinner, that he has so sinn'd. And if it is granted that *Penitence* does not necessarily restore to a Prospect of *Reward*, all Religion and Encouragement to it is lost. I cannot forbear quoting again the accurate and judicious Dr. *Hew*'s Words, who after he has shown that our Offences against GOD incomparably transcend the Measure of any Offence that can be done by one Creature

Living Temple,
Part 2. P. 240.

against another, presently subjoins, "Yea, and
"as it can never be thought congruous, that
"such an Offence against an humane Governour,
"should be pardoned, without the *interveneing Repentance* of the
"Delinquent; so we may easily apprehend also *the Case to be such,*

as that it cannot *be fit*, it should be pardoned on *that alone*, without other Recompence: Whereof if any should doubt, I would demand, Is it, in any Case, *fit*, that a *penitent Delinquent* against humane Laws and Government, should be punish'd, or a proportionable Recompence be exacted for his Offence notwithstanding? Surely it will be acknowledged ordinarily fit; and *who would* take upon him to be the *Censor* of the *common Justice* of the World in all such Cases! Or to damn the Proceedings of *all Times and Nations*, wheresoever a *penitent Offender* hath been made to suffer the legal Punishment of his Offence, notwithstanding his *Repentance*? How strange a *Maxim of Government* would that be, *That it is never fit an Offender, of whatsoever Kind, should be punished, if he repent himself of his Offence!* And surely, if ever, in any Case, somewhat else than *Repentance* be fitly insisted on as a *Recompence*, for the Violation of the sacred Rights of Government, it may well be supposed much more so in the Case of *Man's common Delinquency* and Revolt from GOD.

IV. I reason against this Position, from the Consideration of the *Imperfection* of this *Repentance*, which, as it takes Place amongst sinful Men, is guilty of a *double Imperfection*. Our *Sorrow* and our *Return* are imperfect, in Respect of *Degrees*. Our Relation to GOD and his to us requires the highest, the most perfect Love, and the most cordial Obedience. No less will answer our Obligations. And our *Sorrow*, if it is requir'd, must be suppos'd likewise to be such as results necessarily from such a Love. Now what can be more evident than this, that none of the Children of Men love GOD as they ought, and with that *Intention* and *Vehemency*, which answers their *Original Obligation*? And consequently their *Sorrow* and *Obedience* can never come up to it: For they being the Result of this Love, can never go beyond the Principle, which influences them. Again, our *Return* is liable to another Imperfection, even a frequent Interruption. The Case is not thus, that we only once, through *Infirmity*, make an *Escape*; but even after our *suppos'd Return*, it must be allow'd that there will be *After-deviations*. And hence it becomes a Question, How can we expect *Acceptance* in our *Returns*? How can our *Repentance*, which answers not the Demands of the Law, and our *Ties to Duty* be accepted for it self? And if so, much more may it be a Question, How can it be allowed sufficient to atone for other Transgressions, yea, how can it be sufficient to atone for Transgressions, which it takes no Notice of? For there are such Sins as by the *Light of Nature* we are never likely to reach the *Conviction* of; and therefore it's impossible we should sorrow for them,

them, or repent of them? However Men may please themselves with a Fancy of the *Sufficiency* of their *Repentance*; yet a Sinner, that understands his own Case, will never be able to satisfy his own Conscience in this Matter.

Dr. Whichcot's *Jeſelect Sermons*, Part 2d, Sermon 2d, on Acts 13. 38. P. 322, 323. I know it is pleaded, "That we have a harder Province to administer, than even the *Angels* themselves; they not having so gross a Body as we have, nor exposed to so much Evil as we are. But GOD he knoweth our Frame, and upon that Account, is not extream to mark what is done amiss. A Creature, as a Creature, is finite and fallible: And yet we are not the most perfect of GOD's Creation. Now, for fallible to fail, is no more than for frail to be broken; and mortal to die. Where there is finite and limited Perfection, there is not only a Possibility, but a Contingency to fail, to err, to be mistaken, not to know and to be deceived. And where the Agent is such, there is Place for *Repentance*. *Repentance* is that which makes a finite Being failing, capable of Compassion. If *Repentance* did not take Effect, it would be too hazardous for a Creature to come into Being. If upon a Lapse, an Error, or Mistake, we should be undone to Eternity, without all Hope of Recovery: Who would willingly enter upon this State? Thus speaks Dr. Whichcot.

To this plausible Discourse we answer, either this Reasoning proceeds upon the State of Things, according to the *Covenant of Grace*, and respects them who have laid hold on it, or it does not: If it does proceed on this Foot, we say it helps not the *Deists*: But if, as it seems, it be extended further, then I shall make the following Remarks on it. 1. Albeit we have here many Things prettily said, yet I cannot but deeply dislike the Discourse, because it aims at the *Extenuation of Sin*, and pleads its Excuse from our Frailty. Now besides that this bears hard upon the Author of our Constitution, as if he had made it unequal to the Laws he impos'd on it; 'tis a foolish Argument, because the Case may be as much exaggerate on the other Hand by representing the *Greatness* of the *Law-giver*, the *Equality* of the Laws, and the *Ability* of Man, at least in his first Make to obey. And the one will not signify more to give us Hope of *Forgiveness* on our *Repentance*, than the other will to make us despair of it. 2. It seems to reflect on GOD's different Conduct with the Angels that sinn'd, who had no Place allow'd them for *Repentance*: For their Frame was finite, and

and so frail and failable. The little Difference from the Grossness of our Bodies, if Man is not suppos'd *corrupt*, and his Body inclin'd to *Evil*, makes no Difference that can satisfy; for still we were under no Necessity of sinning from our Constitution, if it is not suppos'd corrupt. But to pretend that Man was made corrupt, carries our Frailty too far, to make it GOD's Deed. We cannot plead, in Excuse, any Defects in our Constitution, that GOD put not there. 3. It damns all humane Laws that spares not penitent Transgressors. If it be said, That they are under a Necessity to do it. I answer whence doth this Necessity arise? Is the Honour of the Divine Law less dear to him and of less Consideration, than the Honour and Rights of humane Constitutions and Governments? But further I desire to know, Will Necessity justify the Punishment of the Penitent? If not, then here it doth not justify: If it doth, who will assure me that there is not as great Necessity for this Course in divine, as humane Governments? At least in some Instances. And if in any Instance the Punishment of a Penitent may take Place, who will condescend where it may and where not? How likewise, can it be said, That *Penitence* secures *Pardon*? Further, 4. I say directly to the Argument; If divine Laws are as much adjusted to Man's *Power*, as the Constitutions and Laws of humane Government are (and they behoov'd to be so, with Respect to his Power in his first Constitution has been made appear) then it is no more hazardous to come into *Being*, than to enter into *humane Society*, where frail Man may, for a Word or a Deed, forfeit his own Life to Justice and all the Advantages of it, and beggar his Posterity, and that without any Prospect of Relief by his *Repentance*. If it be said, The Punishments are greater in this Case; I grant it: So are the *Laws* too, and consequently the *Transgressions*: And so likewise are the Advantages of *Obedience*; and without an injurious Reflection on GOD, it cannot be denied that the Laws are, as well at least, attemper'd to Man's Abilities wherewith he was created and subjected to them. 5. I do not see how it can be in *Justice* to inflict a *just Punishment* upon Transgressors; and such of *Necessity*, that is, which is included in the Sanction of the divine Laws. Nor does *Repentance* make that Execution unjust; which, without it, is allow'd not only just, but *indispensibly necessary*. This I might largely shew, but others have done it well.

See *Specimen Refutationis Crellii*, Pag. 100, 101, & sequ.

V. The Falshood of this Proposition may be further evidenc'd from the Nature of the *Justice of GOD*, that seems necessarily to require that *Sin be punished*. For clearing this, I shall make the ensuing Observations: In doing which, we shall aim at such a gradual Progression as may set the Matter in the best Light.

1. *Justice* strictly taken, is that *Vertue of the rational Nature, whose Business it is to preserve, maintain and be a Guardian of the Rights of rational Beings*. It is commonly defin'd a *constant and abiding or fix'd Will of giving to every one what is their Right or Due*. Whence it has been debated, whether in Man there is any such Thing as *Self-justice*; because, according to this Account of *Justice*, it seems to be restricted to the *Rights of others*. And this Restriction has Countenance given to it from that common Maxim, That *volenti non fit Injuria*, which is founded in this, That a Man is suppos'd capable of parting, without wrong, with his own Rights, and consequently is not capable of Injustice towards himself. It is true, Man has no *Rights*, which he may not denude himself of by his own Consent. Yet since Man has *such Rights*, tho' they are but derived ones, as also his *Being* is, as he cannot denude himself of without Fault, I see not but even such a Thing as *Self-justice* may take Place among Men: But whatever the Case be as to Men, there is certainly in GOD to be allow'd such a Thing as *Self-justice*. For clearing of which, I observe,

2. That GOD, being the *Fountain of all Rights*, has certainly *Rights*, which he can by no Means denude himself of. He has a *Right of Dominion* over the Creature, and to the Creatures Subjection, that he cannot part with. As long as there is a *rational Creature*, it is, by its *Being*, inevitably subject to its *Creator*, and he cannot part with that *Right* he has to govern it. "With the *supreme Pro-*

Living Temple, " *prietor*, there cannot but be *unalienable Rights*,
Part 2. P. 270. " *inseparably and everlastingly inherent in him*:
" *For it cannot be, but that he, who is the*
" *Fountain of all Rights* must have them *primarily and originally in*
" *himself*; and can no more so quit them, as to make the Creature
" *absolute and independent*, than he can make the Creature GOD.
Hence inevitably there must be allow'd *Self-justice*, which is nothing
else, save that *fix'd Determination of the divine Will, not to part with*
what is his own unalienable Right, and consequently *to maintain it*.

3. This *Justice*, in Order to maintain GOD's *Right of Government*, obliges him to enact *penal Laws* as the Measure of the Creatures
Subjection

Subjection and Obedience. A *Subject* he cannot be without *Laws*. And where the Creature is capable of transgressing, *Laws* cannot be such without *Penalties*. Without those, they were rather *Counsels* or *Advices*, than *Laws*; and the Person to whom they are given is left at Will to be subject, or not. And if GOD should thus leave the Creature without a *Penalty*, then upon Transgression, the Transgressor has slipt entirely out under the Dominion of GOD; for he is not *actively*, in that Instance, subject to GOD. And neither is he *passively* subject, if there is no *Penalty*. So that by this Means GOD has forfeited or lost his *Right* which is impossible. There is no other imaginable Ty of Subjection, but either the *Precept* or the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*, whereby rational Creatures, as to their *moral Dependence* can be bound. Now if GOD part with the one, by remitting the *Penalty*, or enacting *Laws* without it, and Man cast off the other by *Disobedience*, the Creature is, at least thus far, *independent*. Which how absurd it is, 'tis easy to see. Wherefore, in Case the Creature is *made*, we cannot but suppose a *Law* must be made to it. And if the Creature is capable of *violating* that *Law*, there must, for preserving that *Right*, which GOD has to the Creatures Subjection, be a *Penalty* annex'd to *that Law*. Whence it seems evident, " That GOD did owe
 " it to himself primarily, as the absolute So. *Living Temple*,
 " vernaigh and Lord of all, not to suffer Indignities P. 271.
 " to be offer'd him, without animadverting upon
 " them, and therefore to *determine* he would do so.

4. The Creature being made, *Justice* requires that it should be under such a *Law* as is enacted with a *Penalty*, and such a *Law* being now enacted, there seems to arise a double Necessity for the Execution of the *Law*, in Case of Transgression. The one arising from the *Reason* of the *Law*, the other from the *Law it self*: Since upon the Grounds already laid down, the *Law* was necessary; the same Grounds inforce the *Execution* of the *Law*: For when the Case falls out, for which the *Law* was provided, it is not merely the *Law* or *Constitution* it self, but the *Execution* of it that secures the *End*. When the Creature disobeys, he has in so far renounced an *actual Dependence* on, and *Subjection* to the *Law-giver* and *Law*: And therefore it seems of Necessity that either as to these Actions he is not subject, or he must be subject to the *Penalty*. Again, as the *Reason* of the *Law* enforces the *Execution*, so does the *Law it self*. For the *Law* being once made, *Justice* requires that its Honour be secur'd either by *Obedience*, or by the *Subjection* of the *Transgressor* to the *Punishment*.

5. To proceed yet further, if the *Law* is not *executed*, the *Design*, even the *principal Design* of *Punishment* in this Case, is not reach'd. It is not the *only* or *main Design* of *Punishment* or *penal Sanctions* to reclaim the Offender, or benefit By-standers, or secure the Community. It's true, the *penal Sanction*, or *Law* enacting the *Penalty*, is of Use to deter from transgressing, and so is of Use to the Community, and all under the Government; but the *Execution*, if the *Sanction* is *Punishment* after this Life, is of no Advantage to the Offender, nor is it instructive to By-standers, or the rest of the Community, who do not see it, wherefore these are not the *principal Ends* of *Punishment*. Tho' it is to be observ'd, *That any publick Intimation that the Penalty shall not be inflicted, could not but be of the worst Consequence to the Community, as rendering it vain as to all that Use which it has of deterring Persons who are under the Law from Sin.* Yet I say, these are not the *principal Ends* of *Punishment*; but the *Satisfaction* of the *Law-giver*. For the Case is not here, as it is in humane Governments, where the *Governour* and *Government* are both constituted for the Good of the Governed, which therefore must be the chief Aim of all Laws: But on the contrary, the Governed are made, and the Laws made, and Penalties enacted for the *Governour*, who made all Things for *himself*. And consequently, the *principal Design* of *Punishment* is the *securing and vindicating his Honour* in the Government. Nor is this any such Thing as answers to private Revenge amongst Men. “ But that wherewith we must suppose the blessed GOD to be pleased in the Matter of punishing, is “ *the Congruity of the Thing it self, that the sacred Rights of his Government over the World be vindicated, and that it be understood* “ *how ill his Nature can comport with any Thing that is impure,* “ *and what is in it self so highly incongruous, cannot but be the Matter* “ *of his Detestation.* He takes eternal Pleasure in the Reasonableness “ and Fitness of his own Determinations and Actions; and rejoices in “ the Works of his own Hands, as agreeing with the *apt, eternal* “ *Schemes and Models*, which he hath conceived in his most wise and “ All-comprehending Mind: So that tho' he desireth not the *Death* “ *of Sinners*, and hath *no Delight* in the *Sufferings* of his afflicted Creatures, which his *immense Goodness* rather inclines him to behold “ with Compassion; yet the *true Ends of Punishment* are so much a “ *greater Good*, than their *Ease and Exemption* from the Suffering they “ had deserved; that they must *rather be chosen*, and cannot be *eligible* “ *for any Reason, but for which also, they are to be delighted in, i. e.*

“ a real Goodness, and Conducibleness to a valuable End inherent in them.

6. As *Justice* in a *strict Sense*, of which hitherto we have spoken, as it denotes that *Rectitude of the divine Nature, which is conversant, about and conservative of the divine Rights*, pleads for *penal Laws* and *Punishment*; so likewise *Justice* in a *large Sense*, as it comprehends all his *moral Perfections, Holiness, Wisdom, Faithfulness, &c.* and answers to that which is amongst Men call'd *universal Justice*, pleads for the same: For so taken, it comprehends his *Holiness* and *perfect Detestation* of all *Impurity*; in Respect whereof, he cannot but be perpetually inclin'd to animadvert with Severity upon Sin; both because of its *irreconcilable Contrariety to his holy Nature*, and the *insolent Affront*, which it therefore directly offers him; and because of the *implicite and most injurious Misrepresentation of him* which it contains in it, as if he were either kindly or more indifferently affected towards it: Upon which Accounts, we may well suppose him to esteem it necessary for him, both to *constitute a Rule for punishing it*, and to *punish it accordingly*; that he may both *truly act his own Nature*, and *truly represent it*. Again it includes, thus taken, his governing *Wisdom*, which requires indispensibly that he do every Thing in his Government so as he may appear *like himself*, and answerably to his *own Greatness*; so as to secure a *deep Regard* for his *Government*, and all the Parts of the Constitution. In Respect whereof, it might be shown, That the *Punishment of Sin*, or the *Execution of the penal Laws* solemnly enacted is necessary. *Wisdom* takes Care that one Attribute do not quite obscure another, and will not allow that he gratify *Mercy* to the Detriment of *Justice*. Again, it includes his *Faithfulness* and *Sincerity*, which seem pledged in enacting the Penalty for its Execution. How is it consistent with them to enact such severe Penalties, if he may remit them without any *Reparation* made for the *Wrong* done? Any one that would see more to this Purpose, besides others, who have discours'd of *vindictive Justice*, may peruse the learn'd Dr. *How's* Living Temple, Part 2d, Chap. 6 and 7, who has learnedly discoursed and improv'd this Subject: To whom we own ourselves indebted for much Light in this Matter.

Thus it seems evident, That whether we take the *divine Justice* in this last and largest Notion, as its comprehensive of all the *Perfections* of the *Deity*, or in the former and strict Notion as it imports a *Virtue*, whose Province it is to take Care of the Preservation of the *incommunicable Rights* of the *Diety*, and vindicate their Honour; it seems *necessarily*

farily to forbid the *Remission of Sin* without the *Punishment* of the Transgressor, or a *Reparation* of the *injur'd Honour* of the Deity.

If it is alledg'd, That by *Repentance* the Sinner returns to his *Subjection*, and so the Honour of GOD's Government is repair'd. I answer, That upon Supposition of the Sinner's *Return*, its being a *sufficient Reparation* of the Honour of the Deity, there would indeed be no *Necessity of Punishment*: But this is the Question, and the Objection begs what is in Question. The Principles now laid down clear, That *Justice* however taken, must take Care to preserve and vindicate GOD's Honour in Case of Transgression. The *penal Sanction* of the *Law* tells us, That the *Punishment* of the Transgressor is that which *Wisdom* and *Justice* have fix'd on, as proper for this End. There is no Alternative, *Punishment* or *Repentance*. The Law makes only Mention of *Punishment*. When therefore the Objectors say that *Repentance* is *sufficient*, we deny it. They do not prove it, nor can they. GOD, to whom alone it belongs to determine what is necessary for the Vindication of his own Honour, must determine the *Reparation*: We cannot. Yea, it were Presumption in Angels to do it. GOD has fix'd upon *Punishment*. If he allow of any Thing else, the *Light of Nature* does not tell it. Nor is there any Thing in the Nature of *Repentance*, as has been above clear'd, that can induce us to think it's *sufficient* to this Purpose. The most vertuous, who must be suppos'd the *Penitents*, if there are any such, meet with as heavy Punishments in this Life as any, which shews, at least, that GOD looks not upon their *Penitence* as *Satisfaction*.

VI. Against this Proposition we reason thus, Every Man is endued with a *Power to repent* when he pleases, or he is not. To assert the Latter, were to yield the Cause; for it matters not to the Sinner, whether *Repentance* be a *sufficient Attonement* or not, if it be not in his *Power to Repent*. Besides it's a Question in this Case of considerable Difficulty, Whether it is consistent with the Perfections of GOD to give *this Power*, till once his *Honour* is secur'd by a *suitable Reparation* for the *Injury* done it by *Sin*. If it is in the Sinner's *Power to repent* when he pleases, then again I insist,

Either GOD without Impeachment of his *Justice* may inflict the *Punishment* contain'd in the *Sanction of the Law* on the Sinner, notwithstanding of his *Repentance*, or he may not. If he may, then the *Deists* can never without *Revelation* be sure that he will not inflict the Punishment, which is what we say: Nor will it mend the Matter, that tho'

tho' GOD, without Impeachment of his *Justice*, may punish the *repenting Sinner*, that he cannot do it without injuring his *Mercy*; for what is contrary to one of GOD's Attributes, is so to all: And moreover, the *Justice* of GOD in particular requires that each of the divine Attributes have their due.

But if it be said, That GOD *cannot* in Justice punish the *repenting Sinner*; then I desire to be satisfied, if this does not evacuate and make void the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*? For if every Man hath a *Power* to repent when he pleases, and *this Repentance* stops the Execution of the Sentence, I don't see but any may offend without Hazard.

All that can be said is, That GOD may surprise Man in the very *Act of Sinning*, or *so soon* after it, that he shall not have Time to *repent*, and so Man's *Hazard* is *sufficient* to deter him from *Sin*.

But to this I answer, That the Consideration of *this Hazard* can never have much Influence on Man, to make him refuse the gratifying of his Senses, in which he finds so much Pleasure, so long as in the ordinary Conduct of Providence he sees that GOD very rarely takes that Course of snatching away Sinners in the very *Act of Sin*, or so soon after, as to preclude *Repentance*. It is not so much what GOD may do, as what he ordinarily does, that is of Weight to determine Men, especially when they have so strong Motives to persuade them to the contrary, as the impetuous Cravings of unruly Lusts are known to be.

This Argument gives us a clear View how much the *Deists* Notion of Pardon upon *meer Repentance* favours *Sin*; and how unreasonable the Out-crys of *Herbert* and *Blount*, repeated *ad Nauseam*, against the Maintainers of *Satisfaction* really are. They say, The *Doctrine of Satisfaction* makes *Sin cheap*. But whether do they who say that *Sin* cannot be pardon'd without the Sinner's *Repentance* and *Satisfaction*, or they who assert *Repentance alone* sufficient, make *Sin cheapest*?

VII. I further argue against this Doctrine, That this *Constitution, Grant or Allowance* of *Repentance*, in Case of Transgression, is either *co-eval* to the *Law*, and has its *Rise* as the *Law* hath, in the Relation betwixt GOD and Man and their Natures, as being a necessary Result of them; or it is a posterior Establishment, and an *Act of free and gracious Condescendence* in GOD, to which he was not necessarily oblig'd. If this last is said, then say I, This could not be known, but by a *Revelation* or some Deed of GOD, expressive of his Mind in this Matter. The First is deny'd by the *Deists*; and we desire them to produce

produce the *Work of Providence*, whereon it's legible, that GOD without any other Reparation to his *Justice*, for the Injury done him by *Sin*, will pardon the Sinner upon his *Penitence* and admit him to *Bliss*. For tho' we should admit that some *Works of Providence* singly taken, without observing others which have a contrary Aspect, have somewhat like an Intimation of a *Placability*, which we see but little Reason to do; yet we deny positively that there is any that specifies the Terms, or particularly condescends on *Repentance*, as that whereon he will be pacify'd and reconcil'd to Sinners. And if any will pretend to draw this from them, I wish they would essay it, and let us see of what Form their Procedure will be: Perhaps they may prove that it's not consistent with GOD's Attributes to pardon an impenitent Sinner: But if they think thence to infer, That therefore it's consistent to his *Attributes* to pardon one meerly upon his *Penitence*, they may make good the Consequence if they can; they will find it harder than it appears.

If the Former is said, That this Constitution is *co-eval* with the *Law*, and is as much a necessary Result of the *Nature of GOD* and *Man*, and their *mutual Relation* as the *Law* it self. Besides what has been said to demonstrate the Folly of it, let these three Things be considered;

1. The *Deists* do and are oblig'd to say, That Man is not now from his *Birth* more corrupt than he was at first.

2. Man at his *Original* was, and consequently according to them, still is endued with *Power*, sufficient perfectly to know and obey the *Law* he is subjected to. To say that he was subjected to a *Law*, which he was not able to know or obey, is to accuse the Deity of *Folly* and *Injustice*; as has been made appear.

3. The *Law* to which Man is subjected, is exactly suited to GOD's *great Design*, his *own Glory* and *Man's Happiness*.

These being granted, I conceive it evident, 1. That Nothing can be said more injurious to the glorious Perfections of GOD, than that any of them gives Ground of Hopes, far less Assurance of *Impunity* to Man, if he break these Laws, which are equally suited to promote GOD's Glory and his own Good, and which he wanted neither Power to know nor obey. 2. Such a Grant would be of no less dangerous Consequence to Man, because it could be of no other Use, than to tempt to a Violation of those Laws, which it is so much his Interest to obey.

But

But some may say, It would be discouraging to Man to think he were *undone*, if he disobey'd in the least. I answer, This could be no reasonable Discouragement if he was possessed of *Power* perfectly to know and obey the Law he was subjected to.

Again, it may be said, That it was necessary there should be such an Incouragement to Man; because, tho' he were intrusted with *sufficient Power* to know and obey the Law of GOD; yet he was for *Trial* expos'd to a great many strong and forcible Temptations to Disobedience.

For Answer to this; suppose two Men *equally able* to know and obey the Law; the one knows he may obtain *Pardon* on *Repentance*, the other believes himself *irrecoverably lost* if he transgress; I desire the Objecter, on Supposition that both were attack'd with a Temptation equally strong, to answer me seriously, 1. Which of those two would in all Probability soonest yield; he that saw a *Probability* of Escape, or he that saw *none*? 2. Since the keeping of the Law was highly advantageous to both, which of the two is in the best State? he who has this strong Motive to *Obedience*, that he is ruin'd if he disobey; or he that hath this Encouragement and Inforcement of the Temptation to Disobedience, that he may disobey and escape? Nor will they evade by saying, That this Constitution was knowable before, but was not taken notice of till *Sin* fell out: For if it might be known, all the Inconveniencies mention'd will follow. Besides, if it was taken notice of after the *first Sin*, it might be a Temptation to all succeeding Transgressions.

In Fine, If this *Allowance of Repentance* be said to have the same Rise with the Law, and be equally necessary from the Nature of GOD and Man and their *mutual Relation*; it is a plain *Dispensation* with the Law, and that equally made publick, being notified in the same Way as the Law is; which how it is consistent with the *Wisdom, Holiness* and *Justice* of GOD, I know not.

VIII. To add no more on this Head, If this Story about the *Sufficiency of Repentance* lies so open to the *Light of Nature*, whence was it that it was so little discerned? The Name of it, in the Sense and to that Use we now speak of, scarce occurs amongst the Ancients, if we may believe *Herbert*, who read them all with great Diligence, and with a Design to find what was for his Purpose. Speaking of their Sins, he says, "*Neque igitur mihi Dubium est, quin eorum pœnituerit Gentiles, quæ tot Mala accerserunt, licet rarius quidem Pœnitentiæ Verbum inter Authores, eo, quo jam usurpa-*

Herbert de Relig. Gentil. P. 198.

"tur Sensu; reperitur. Why does not he doubt of it? The Reason he goes on is, Because they us'd *Sacrifices*. But I suppose for this very Reason some do doubt if they thought *Repentance sufficient*: But of this more by and by. The *Philosophers* neither taught nor practis'd it. It's

Ibid. 197.

true, *Periander* one of the wise Men of *Greece*, had this for his saying, Ἀμαρτῶν μεταβολὴς, *Repent of thy Sins*; that is, possibly, leave them off.

For who can tell us whether he had a right Notion of *Repentance*, or of what Avail he thought it? *Seneca* says, *Quem pœnitet peccasse pene est innocens*. This is spoken with his usual Pride that made him think little of *Sin*. But where is the Person that taught *Repentance*, or offered to evince it *sufficient* to atone the *Deity*? Most of them contemptuously disregarded it. We find Nothing like it in their best Moralists Practice: But on the contrary, they were so puffed up with their *Vertues*, that they made no Account of their *Sins*. The Priests taught not this Doctrine, for they inculcated *Sacrifices* as necessary to atone the *Deity*. And if we may believe no incompetent Judge, both

Cæsar de Bello Gal.
Lib. 6.

See *Outramus de*
Sacrificiis, Lib. 1. *Cap.*
22.

Priests and People were persuaded that *Repentance* is not sufficient to atone the *Deity*. It is *Cæsar*, who tells us, that, "*Pro Vita Hominis nisi Vita Hominis reddatur non posse Deorum Immortalium Numen placari arbitrantur Galli*. To which we might add many more Testimonies to the same Purpose. Nor do we find any Thing

like this Discovery among them; which is very strange in a Matter of Importance, if it was so clearly reveal'd. That which is most like what they would be at, is what we find in *Ovidius*.

De Ponto, Lib.
1. Eleg. 1.

Ibid. Eleg. 7.

Sæpe levant Pœnas, creptaque Lumina reddunt
Quem bene Peccati pœnituisse vides. Et albi,
Quamvis est igitur Meritis indebita nostris,
Magna tamen Spes est in Bonitate Dei.

But this is Nothing to the Purpose: How many of the Poets Notions, and particularly this one, were traditional? How evidently were their Notions of all Things about the Gods suited to their own fabulous Stories of the Clemency of the Gods. And besides, we have no Assurance that he understood what we do by *Repentance*. Nor indeed could he. But of this more anon.

Objections

Objections considered.

IT remains now that we take notice of some considerable Objections that are made against what hitherto has been discours'd by different Persons, on different Views and Principles.

I. Say some, If the Case is so apparent *that all have sinn'd*, and the *Relief is so hid*, that *Nature's Light* could not discern it; whence is it that all Men run not to Despair and took Sanctuary here? Whence is it that religious Worship was universally continu'd in the World? Yea, whence is it that such a Worship universally obtain'd, that seems founded on the Supposition of a *placable GOD*?

To this specious Argument we answer, That many Things there are in *Nature*, whereof we can give no satisfying Account. And if there should prove something in *Morality* too, not to be accounted for, it were not to be wonder'd at. But not to insist on this, I answer directly. A fair Account may be given of this otherwise than by admitting what we have overthrown upon so many clear Arguments. Towards which, we shall make the following Attempt. 1. The *natural Notices* of a *Deity*, that are inlaid in the Minds of Men, strongly prompted them to *Worship* some one or other. From this *natural Obligation* they could not shake themselves loose. 2. Their Ignorance and Darkeness as to the real Horrour of the Case, made them think little of Sin, and consequently apprehend that it would not prove such an Obstruction to Acceptance, as really they had Reason to apprehend it was. 3. All who allow of *Revelation*, own that the *Revelation of Forgiveness*, as well as the *Means* of obtaining it, was *twice universal* in the Days of *Adam* and of *Noah*. 4. Tho' this *Revelation* was in so far lost by the Generality of Mankind, that it could not be useful to its *proper End*, yet somewhat of it remain'd still in the World, and spread it self with Mankind. 5. All Sorts of Men found their Interest and Account in keeping it up. The *Priests* who ingross'd the Advantage of the *Religion* of the World, found their Gain in it. The *Politicians* who aim'd at the Good of Society, found it useful to their Purpose. The *Poets* who aim'd at Pleasing, found it capable of tickling the Ears of a World involv'd in Sin. And the *People* whose Consciences were harass'd with Guilt of atrocious Crimes, found some Sort of Relief. And what all found some Benefit by, was not likely quite to be lost. The

Philosophers seeing the Strait of the Case, saw that they could not make a better of it and so acquiesc'd. 6. Their profane Cenceptions of the *Deities*, as if they were Persons that allow'd or practis'd their Evils, did help forward. The *Gods* which their own Fancy had fram'd, they could cast into what Mould they pleas'd, as it best suited their Interest or Inclinations. 7. *Satan* who acted a very visible Part among them, and bore Sway without Controul, no doubt had a deep Hand in the Matter, and could variously revive, alter and manage the *Tradition*, *natural Notices* and *Interests* of Men, so as to make his own Advantage of them. Other Things might be added, shewing the Concernment of the holy GOD in this Matter, which I shall wave for some Reasons that are satisfying to may self. But what is said, I conceive sufficient to blunt the Edge of the Objection. I shall only subjoin the Words of the learn'd *Amyrald*, who after he has own'd the *natural Discoveries* of *Placability*; but withall shewn their Uselessness, and that they had no Influence nor could have in the Words formerly quoted, at Length he moves this same Objection that we have here propos'd, and returns the Answer, which we shall now transcribe, tho' it is somewhat long, the rather because it comes from a Person not only of great Learning, but one who own'd *Placability* might be demonstrated by the *Light of Nature*, and yet denies that it was the *Foundation of the Religion* that was to be found in the World. " But

" perhaps, says he, it will here be demanded,
Amyrald of Relig. " Whence then came it to pass that all Nations
Part 1. Chap. 7. Pag. " have each of them had its Religion? And
 254, 255, 256. " why are not all Men dissociated instead of
 " hinging together into religious Society? To
 " which I answer, That the Mind of Man is never agitated with the
 " same Emotions, nor constant in the same Thoughts; the same
 " Passion not always possessing him, nor the same Vice. They take
 " their Turns, or succeed and mingle one with another. Two Things
 " therefore have hindred that Men, tho' possessed with Fear, have not
 " abandoned all Service of the Deity, *Profaneness* and *Pride*: GOD
 " permitting the *Profaneness* of some and the *Presumption* of others
 " to temper the Terrour of Conscience. *First, Profaneness*; because
 " not weighing sufficiently how much GOD abominates Vice, and
 " how inexorable his Justice is, they often have flattered themselves
 " with this Thought, That he scarce takes any notice of small Offences,
 " and such as are in the Intention and Purpose only, that is, in

" the

“ the *Affections* of the *Will* and not in *Actions* really executed. More-
“ over they thought he was not much incens'd, but with Crimes that
“ turn to some notable Detriment to the Common-wealth, or carry
“ some Blot of infamous Improbability. Although masculine Lust was
“ either justify'd or excus'd, or tolerated by the most civiliz'd People
“ of *Greece*. And they were sometimes so besotted in their Devotions,
“ that they thought not but Crimes of the greatest Turpitude with
“ no great Difficulty might be expiated by their *Sacrifices*, *Lustrations*,
“ *religious Processions*, *Mysteries* and *Bacchanal Solemnities*. On the o-
“ ther Side, *Presumption*; because not sufficiently acknowledging how
“ much they ought to the Deity, they imagin'd that their good
“ Works, their Offerings, and the Exercise of that Shadow of Vertue,
“ which they pursued, might countervail the Offences they commit-
“ ted: So that they were ballanced together, there might be Hope
“ not only to *avoid Punishment*, but moreover to *obtain Recompence*.
“ Upon which Ground it was that *Socrates* being near his End, and dis-
“ coursing of the *Immortality of the Soul*, speaks largely of his Hope,
“ (in Case the Soul be not extinguished with the Body) to go and
“ live with *Hercules* and *Palamedes*, and the other Persons of high
“ Account. But as to asking GOD Pardon of the Offences he had
“ committed, he makes no Mention at all of it; because, tho' he
“ spoke always dissemblingly of himself, he had in the Bottom of his
“ Soul great Opinion of his own *Vertue*, and made no great reck'ning
“ of his Vices, from which notwithstanding he was no more exempt
“ than others. And had his Life been of such Purity; that the Eyes
“ of Men could not discern a Blot in it (although some have written
“ infamous Matters of him) yet when the Account is to be made up
“ with GOD, there needs another *Perfection of Vertue* than that of
“ his to satisfy so exact a Justice. But yet further, oftentimes these
“ two Vices of *Profaneness* and *Presumption* have met together in the
“ same Subject, and lull'd Men with vain Hopes into absolute Supi-
“ nity. Whence the Excess of Fear hath been retrenched, which
“ would otherwise have at last turn'd into Despair, and consequently
“ not only dissipated all Communion in Religion, but likewise ruin'd
“ all humane Society. For Fear restraining Man on the one Side
“ from absolute condemning the Deity by *Profaneness*, on the other
“ Side, *Profaneness* and *Presumption* hindred it from precipitating
“ Men into that furious Despair which would have overthrown all,
“ and caus'd more horrible Agitations in the Mind of Man, than ever
“ the

“ the most outrageous *Bacchides* were sensible of. So that by the Mixture, Vicissitude and Variation of these diverse Humours has Religion been maintain'd in the World. But it is easy to judge how sincere that Devotion was, which was bred of *Fear*, (a Passion that is naturally terminated on Hatred) *Self-preservation*, and *Misapprehension* of the Justice of GOD. Whereas the certain Knowledge of the *Remission* of Sins, of which the *special Revelation* from Heaven can only give us assured Hope, is a marvellous powerful Attractive to Piety, out of *Gratitude* towards so *inestimable a Goodness*.

II. Some object against what has been proven, That GOD is *Good, Compassionate and Kind*. And that *Natures* of any *Excellency* take Pleasure in exercising *Mercy, Compassion and Kindness*, and Difficulty are brought to Acts of *Severity*.

I answer 1. The *Goodness, Kindness, Mercy and Compassion* of GOD are a pretty Subject for Men to declaim and make Harangues about. But when they are made, they are little to the Purpose; for they are easily answer'd by a Representation of the *Justice and Holiness* of GOD. And the Difficulty is not touch'd, unless Men can shew how these seemingly jarring Attributes may be consistent. 2. The Inferences Men must draw from such Representations of the *Nature* of GOD, are such as will cross the *Experience* of Mankind who want *Revelation*, and see many Effects of his *Bounty, Goodness, Forbearance and Patience*, but none of his *pardoning Mercy*; and many of his *Justice and holy Severity*. Wherefore we may leave this Subject and proceed, tho' much might be said to clear how little all this is to the Purpose. But we conceive this is apparent from what has been above discours'd.

III. It is said, “ That the very Command of
 Baxter's *Reasons* “ GOD to use his appointed Means for Mens
 of *Christ. Relig. Part* “ Recovery, doth imply that it shall not be in
 I. Chap. 17. §. 9. P. “ Vain, and doth not only shew a *Possibility*,
 186. “ but so great a *Hopefulness* of the Success to the
 “ Obedient, as may encourage them chearfully to
 “ undertake it, and carry it through.

In answer to this, I have above clear'd, That Men are still oblig'd to obey; that there are many Things, of which several are by him mention'd in the subsequent Sections of that Chapter, whence these Words are quoted, which might be improv'd to excite Man to a cordial Compliance, in Case there were a new, clear and plain Invitation to a *Return with Hope of Acceptance*. And I admit, That to deny this,

this, as he says, in the Words immediately preceeding those now quoted, were to make *Earth* a *Hell*. Yea further, so long as Men are out of *Hell*, there is still a Possibility in the Case: But that there is any such *Invitation* given, or *Assurance* of a *hopeful Issue*, or *Means directly and specially institute by GOD as Means of Recovery*, knowable by Men left to the *meer Light of Nature*, I deny: Because I see not the Shadow of a Proof and Evidence to the contrary that has been offer'd.

IV. It is alledg'd by the same Author, That GOD's commanding us to *forgive* others, encourages us to expect *Forgiveness* at his Hand.

Ibid. §. 5.

To this I say 1. The learn'd Person owns, "That from this it doth not follow, That GOD
" *must forgive* all, which he bindeth us to *for-*

Ibid.

" *give*, for Reasons he had before express'd. 2. I say, That this, *the Command of GOD to forgive others*, lies not so open to the View of *Nature's Light*, as that every one can discern it. And besides, it admits of many Exceptions, for ought that *unassisted Nature* can discover. 3. It is restricted to private Persons, and is not to be extended to publick Injuries done against *Government*. 4. When it is found to be our Duty by *Nature's Light*, we are brought to see it by such Reasons as these, That we need the like Favour at their Hands, that we are frail, &c. which gives us Ground to be jealous that the like is not to be expected at his Hand, with whom these Things have no Place, which are the Reason of the Law to us. So that from this, as it's discoverable by *Nature's Light*, no sure Inference can be drawn.

V. It is objected, That *Sacrifices* and all the *religious Services* amongst the Heathens, were only *Symbolical* of a good *Life* and *Repentance*.

See A. W's Letter, Oracles of Reas. Pag.

To this I say, 1. If this were true, *Herbert* and the *Deists* are much in the Wrong to the *Priests* who urg'd the Use of them, as Men who neglected to inculcate *Repentance*. For any Thing I can see they were more commendable than the *Philosophers*, who neither taught nor practis'd *Repentance*, and vilify'd *Sacrifices*. But 2. This is a scandalous Falshood: For there is Nothing more evident, than that by the *Sacrifices* they design'd to atone the *Deities*, and expected that they should be accepted in Place of the Offerers, and their Death be admitted instead of what they had deserv'd themselves. See Abundance of
Testimo-

Testimonies given to this by him to whom we referr'd, when we quoted *Cesar's* Testimony to this Purpose; I mean *Outram*. What, I pray, mean'd the Custom that prevail'd not only among the *Jews*, but *Heathens*, of offering their Sacrifices with solemn Prayers to GOD, that all the Plagues which they, or their Country had deserv'd, might light on the Head of the *Victim*; and so they themselves escape? And hereupon they thought that all their Sins did meet upon it, and defile it to that Degree, that none, who had touch'd it, dar'd to return home till they had wash'd and purify'd themselves. *Suidas* reports of the *Greeks*, "*Quod, ei, qui malis averruncandis quotannis destinatus erat, sic imprecabantur, sis $\pi\epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha$ nostrum, hoc est, Salus & Redemptio. Atque ita illum in Mare projiciebant, quasi Neptuno Sacrum persolventes. Servius tells, "Masilienes, quoties Pestilentia laborabant, unus se ex Pauperibus offerebat, alendus Anno integro publicis & purioribus Cibis. Hic postea, ornatus Verbenis & Vestibus sacris, circumducebatur per totam Civitatem cum Execrationibus, ut in ipsum reciderent Mala totius Civitatis; & sic projiciebatur. But we have stay'd too long in refuting this mad and ungrounded Conceit.*

VI. Some, to prove that the *Works of Providence*, particularly his *Forbearance to Sinners* and *Bounty to them*, do call Men to Repentance without the Word, urge the Apostle's Words, *Rom. 2. 4. Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of GOD leadeth thee to Repentance?* To this we answer,

1. Divines, and these not a few, nor of the lowest Form, do understand this whole Context of the *Jews*; and they urge Reasons for it that are not contemptible. If this Opinion hold, no more can be drawn from these Words, than what has been already granted without any Prejudice to our Cause; viz. That this Dispensation, where Persons are otherwise under a Call to Repentance, gives Time to repent, and enforceth the Obligation of that Call they are under.

2. But to cut off all Pretence of any Plea from this Scripture, we shall take under our Consideration, the Apostle's whole Discourse from the 16 Verse of the 1 Chap. to the 4. Verse of the 3d, and give a View of these Words, and other Passages insisted upon to the same Purpose, with a special Eye to the Apostle's Scope in the Discourse, and the particular Design of every Passage. And this we shall undertake,

take, not so much out of any Regard to this Objection in-particular, but to obviate the Abuse of several Passages of this Discourse of the Apostle, by one with whom we shall have just now Occasion to debate almost every Verse in this second Chapter. If therefore our Resolution of the Apostle's Discourse seem a little tedious at present, this Disadvantage will be compensate by the *Light* it will contribute for clearing many of the ensuing Objections.

The Apostle *Paul*, *Rom. 1. 16.* had asserted, That the *Gospel is the Power of GOD to Salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek*, that is, It is the only powerful Mean of Salvation to Persons of all Sorts; neither *Jew* nor *Greek* can be saved by any other Mean. In the 17 Verse, he advances an Argument for Proof of this Assertion, which is plainly this; That Revelation, which exhibits the *Righteousness of GOD*, which is the only *Righteousness* that can please *GOD*, and on the Account whereof he accepts and justifies Sinners; and which exhibits *this Righteousness*, not upon slender or conjectural Grounds, but *from Faith*, that is, upon the Testimony of the *Faithful GOD*, who can neither be deceiv'd nor deceive us, proposes this *Righteousness* to our *Faith*, is the only powerful Mean of Salvation: But it is the *Gospel* only that doth reveal *this Righteousness* of *GOD* from *Faith*, or upon the Credit of divine Testimony unto *Faith*: Therefore the *Gospel* is the only powerful Mean of *GOD's* Appointment.

This is plainly the Apostle's Argument; and if we consider it, we will find it to comprize three Assertions; 1. That the *Righteousness of GOD* reveal'd in the *Gospel*, and receiv'd by *Faith*, is that, on the Account whereof, Sinners are accepted with and justify'd before *GOD*. This is one Branch of his *first Proposition*, which he designs to explain and confirm afterwards at Length. Here he only confirms it by hinting a Proof of it from the Prophet *Habakkuk's* Words, *The Just shall live by Faith*, that is, *Faith* receiving the *Righteousness of GOD* reveal'd in the Promise, is the Foundation of all the Godly, their Hopes of Pardon, Peace with *GOD*, Grace to support under Trials, and a merciful Deliverance from them. As it is by these Things they live in troublesome Times; so it's the Acceptance of *this Righteousness*, that gives them any Right to these Advantages. 2. His *first Proposition* implies this Assertion, That *this Righteousness of GOD* reveal'd in the *Gospel*, is the only effectual Mean of Acceptance with and Justification before *GOD*; or, that there is no other Way wherein any of the

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Children of Men may obtain those Advantages, save this Way of accepting by Faith, *the Righteousness of GOD*, upon the Credit or Faith of his Testimony; this is the other Branch of his first Proposition. 3. The Apostle asserts in this Argument, That the *Gospel doth reveal this Righteousness of GOD*; on which, and on which only, Acceptance with and Justification before GOD are to be obtain'd, *from Faith to Faith*. This is the Apostle's Assumption or second Proposition.

The Apostle having hinted for present, at a sufficient Proof of the *First* of these Assertions, as has been said, passes it. He lays aside likewise the *Third* of these Assertions, designing to clear it afterwards: And addresses himself to the Proof of the *Second* in the ensuing Discourse from Chap. 1. Verse 18. to Chap. 3. Verse 20. or thereabout.

The Proposition then which our Apostle spends the whole Context under Consideration in Proof of, is, *That there is no other Way whereby a Sinner can obtain Justification before, or Acceptance with GOD, but by Faith*: Or that *neither Gentiles nor Jews can be justify'd before GOD by their own Works*.

This he demonstrates, *First* against the *Gentiles* in particular, from Chap. 1. Verse 18. to Chap. 2. Verse 16. according to our present Supposition, or Concession to our Adversaries. Next, He proves the same in particular against the *Jews*, Chap. 2. to Verse 8. of Chap. 3. And from thence to the Close of his Discourse he demonstrates the same in general against *all Mankind* whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

I. Then, he demonstrates against the *Gentiles* in particular, That they cannot be justify'd before GOD by *the Works* they may pretend to have done in *Obedience* to the *Law of Nature*, by the ensuing Arguments, which we shall not reduce into Form; but only propose the Force of them, by laying down in the most natural and easy Order, the Propositions whereof they do consist.

I. The Apostle insinuates, Verse 18. That the *Gentiles* had some *Notions of Truth* concerning GOD; and the Worship due to him from the *Light of Nature*, Verse 18. tho' they imprison'd them: And what here he insinuates, he directly proves, Verse 19, 20.

II. He asserts, That they did not walk answerably to *these Notices*, but detain'd them in *Unrighteousness*; that is, they suppress'd, bore them down, and would not allow them that directive Power over their Practices which they claim'd; but in Opposition to them went on in Sin. This he had intimated in the General, Verse 18. and he proves it, Verse 21, 22, 23.

III. He

III. He proves, That the *Wrath of GOD* is reveal'd from Heaven, especially by Instances of spiritual Plagues, the most terrible of all Judgments, against them for their counteracting those *Notices of Truth*. This he had also intimated, Verse 18. and proves it, Verse 24, 25, 26.

IV. He shews, That the *Gentiles* being thus, by the just Judgment of GOD, given up and left to themselves, did run on from evil to worse in all Sorts of Abominations; and thereby did render their own Condemnation the more sure, inevitable and intolerable. This he does from Verse 26. to 32.

V. To confirm this further, Verse 32. he shews, That the Fact cannot be deny'd, in Regard that they both practis'd those Evils themselves, and made themselves guilty by their virtual Approbation of them in others: Nor could it be excus'd, since they could not but know, if they attended to the *Light of Nature*, that such gross *Abominations* are *worthy of Death*.

VI. The Apostle having in the last Verse of Chap. 1. mention'd this Aggravation of their Sins, that they were against Knowledge, takes Occasion thence to proceed to a new Argument, whereby he at once confirms what he had said about their sinning against Knowledge, Chap. 1. Verse 32. and further evinces his main Point, That they must inevitably be condemn'd by a new Argument, which he lays down in the ensuing Assertions, either express'd or insinuate.

1. He takes notice, That the *Gentiles*, if he speaks of them, do themselves practise those Things, which they judge and condemn others for.

2. He takes it for granted, as well he may, That he who condemns any Practice of another, doth confess that, That Practice in it self is worthy of Condemnation.

3. He hereon infers, That the *Gentiles* do practise those Things, which according to their own Acknowledgment, are in themselves *worthy of Condemnation*. Now this Conclusion directly fixes upon them the Aggravation mention'd in the Close of the preceeding Chapter, viz. That they know the Things they do to be *worthy of Death*. And this sufficiently clears the Connexion.

4. He subsumes again, That the Judgment of GOD being always according to Truth, he will certainly condemn all, who do Things that in Truth are worthy of Condemnation, Verse 2.

5. Hereon by an inevitable Consequence, Verse 3. he concludes, That GOD will certainly condemn the *Gentiles*, which is the main Point that

6. As an Inference from the Whole, he concludes, That as any Prospect of Escape is vain, so they are precluded from all Excuse, or Shadow of Ground for reclaiming against the Sentence of GOD, which by their own Acknowledgement proceeds only against Practices, that are in Truth worthy of Condemnation.

VII. The Apostle having thus lock'd them up, as it were, under unavoidable Condemnation, proceeds *Vers. 4.* to cut off their Retreat to that, wherein some of them took Sanctuary. They concluded, That GOD, who did forbear them, while they went on in Sin, and allow'd them to share so deep in his Goodness, would not punish them so severely. To cut off this Plea, the Apostle first taxes them as guilty of a grievous Abuse of this Dispensation, while they drew Encouragement from it to go on in Sin. 2. He argues them of gross Ignorance of the genuine Tendency of this dealing of GOD. To argue thus, *GOD spares me and is good to me, therefore I may safely sin against him and hope for his Impunity in committing known Sin against him*, is mad and unreasonable. Reason would say, *GOD forbears me, and so gives me Time*; he adds to former Obligations *I lay under to obey him by loading me with new Kindnesses, therefore I should be the more studious to please him, and avoid these Things, which I know will be offensive to him, and be asham'd for former Offences.* This by the Way is the full Import of that Expression, *The Goodness of GOD leading to Repentance.* But of this more anon. 3. Hereon *Vers. 5.* he infers that their Abuse of this Dispensation and their not returning to Obedience, or answering the Obligations laid on them increases their Guilt, and so lays up Materials for an additional Libel, and a more highly accented Punishment, *Vers. 5.*

Having thus shortly given an Account of the Scope and Meaning of the Words, I shall next lay down a few short Observations clearly subversive of any Argument that can be drawn from them.

1. None can say, That the Persons, who were under this Dispensation did, in Fact, understand it to import a *Call to Repentance.* The Apostle accuses them of Ignorance of this, and of abusing it by drawing Encouragement from it, That they should *escape Punishment*, tho' they went on in Sin.

2. It's plain, the Apostle's Scope led him to no more, but this, to evince, That this Dispensation afforded them no Ground to hope for Impunity, no Encouragement to proceed in a Course of *known Sin*, that *Sin* aggravate the Guilt of their Continuance in such Sins, and enforce the

the Obligations, they otherwise were under to Abstinence from them and the Practice of neglected Duties. This is all the Words will bear, and all that the Scope requires.

3. The Apostle is proving, as we have clearly evinc'd above, That the Persons, with whom he is now dealing, without Recourse to the *Gospel Revelation*, are shut up from all Access to *Justification before GOD, Acceptance with him, Pardon and Salvation*; certainly therefore he cannot in this Place be understood to intend, That these Persons were under Means *sufficient* to lead them to *that Repentance*, upon which they might be assur'd of *Forgiveness and Peace with GOD*.

4. This same Apostle elsewhere appropriates the *Call to Repentance* unto the *Gospel Revelation*, Acts 17. 30. speaking to the *Heathens at Athens*, he says, — *The Times of this Ignorance GOD winked at; but now commandeth all Men every where to repent*. Here it is plain, That Men left to the *Light of Nature*, are left without this *Call*, until the *Gospel come* and give this *Invitation*.

5. Wherefore we may from the particular Scope of this Verse, the general Scope of the Apostle's Discourse, and his plain Declarations upon other Occasions, conclude, 1. That the *Repentance* he here intends, is not *that Repentance* to which the *Promise of Pardon* is in the *Gospel* annex'd; but only an *Abstinence* from *these Evils*, which their Consciences condemn them for, and the *Return* to some Sort of Performance of the material Part of known, but deserted Duty. Frequent Mention is made of such a *Repentance* in Scripture; but no where is *Pardon* promis'd upon it. 2. This *leading* imports no more, but that the Dispensation we speak of, discovers this *Return* to be Duty; and gives Space or Time for it.

6. To confirm what has been now said, it's to be observ'd, That our Apostle acquaints us, that this *Forbearance and Goodness* is exercis'd towards *the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction*, Rom. 9. 22. which sufficiently intimates that this Dispensation of it self, gives no *Assurance of Pardon* to these, who are under it, but is consistent with a fix'd Purpose of punishing them. Yet without *this Assurance*, it is impossible there should ever be any *Call to Repentance*, that can be available to any of Mankind, or answer the Hypotheses of those, with whom we have to do.

VIII. In the Close of *Vers. 5.* the Apostle introduces a Discourse of the *last Judgment* for two Ends: *First*, To cut off those *Abusers of GOD's Goodness* from all Hope of Escape. He has before shew'd that they

they have stor'd up Sins, the Causes of Wrath; and here he shews there is a Judgment design'd, wherein they will reap as they have sown. Thus the Words following are a Confirmation of the foregoing Argument, and enforce the Apostle's main Scope. *Secondly*, He does it for clearing the *Righteousness* of GOD from any Imputation that the Dispensation he had been speaking of, *viz.* his *Forbearance* and *Goodness* towards Sinners, might tempt blind Men to throw upon it: And this he does by shewing that this is not the Time of *Retribution*, but that there is an *open* and *solemn Distribution* design'd, wherein GOD will fully clear *his Righteousness*. To these *two Ends* is this whole Account of the last Judgment suited. He tells them, That there is a *Day of Wrath and of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of GOD*. While he speaks of *the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of GOD*, he tacitly grants that by this Dispensation of *Forbearance*, the *Righteousness* of GOD's Judgment is some Way *clouded* or under a *Vail*: But withall he intimates that there is a definite Time, a *Day* fix'd for its Manifestation; and that this Day will prove a *Day of Wrath*, that is a Day wherein the vindictive Justice of GOD will signally manifest it self, in punishing such Sinners, as they were with whom he deals. In short, he acquaints them that the Design of *this Day* is to *reveal the righteous Judgment of GOD*, that is, to manifest to the Conviction of Angels and Men, the *Righteousness* of GOD's Proceedings toward the Children of Men, particularly as to *Rewards* and *Punishments*. It will be *righteous*, and therefore such Sinners as they shall not escape. It will be *reveal'd* to be such; and so all Ground of Calumny will be taken away. To clear this, he gives an Account of the Concernments of that Judgment, in so far as it's to his Purpose, wherein,

1. He teaches, That there will be an open *Retribution* of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, GOD will render, &c.

2. He shews, That GOD will proceed in *this Retribution* upon *open* and *incontestible Evidence*. He will render according to *Works*. The Persons who are to be punished, shall, to the Conviction of Onlookers, be convicted by their *Works of Impiety*; and the Piety of those, to whom the *Rewards* are given, shall in like Manner be clear'd.

3. He acquaints them, That the Distribution will be suitable to the Character of the Persons, the Nature and Quality of their Works. He will render according to their *Works*; that is, *Evil* to the Evil; *Good* to the Good. This is all that is intended by *κατα, secundum* or according:

according : The Meaning is not that he will render according to the *Merit* of their *Works*. For tho' I own, That GOD will punish according to the *just Demerit* of Sin; yet that is not intended here by this Phrase *according to Works*: For the Word in its proper Signification, intimates not strict or universal Proportion betwixt the Things connected by it; much less doth it particularly import, That the one is the meritorious Cause of the other : But the Word is, in all Languages, commonly taken in a more lax Signification, to denote any Suitableness betwixt the Things connected by it. So our LORD says to the blind Men, *Matth. 9. 29. According to your Faith be it unto you.* Who will say that *any Faith*, but especially such a lame one, as we have Reason to think they had, did merit that miraculous Cure; or that it was every Way suitable unto it? Since then the Word of it self does not import this, it cannot be taken so here, unless either other Scriptures determine us to this Sense, or something in the Context fix this to be the Meaning of it. To take it in this Sense as to *Rewards*, is so far from having any Countenance from other Scriptures, that it is directly contrair to the whole Current of them. And when the Word is taken in this Sense, then the Scriptures plainly tell that we are not *sav'd* or *rewarded* by or *according to our Works of Righteousness*, but *according to his Mercy through Jesus Christ*, *Tit. 3. 5, 6.* Nor is there any Thing in the Text or Context to incline us to take it in this Sense, but much on the contrary to demonstrate that this is not the Meaning, at least, with Respect to *Rewards* : For to say, That the *Reward* shall be given us *according to our Works*, that is *for our Works*, as meritorious of it, flatly contradicts the Apostle's Scope, which is to prove, That all Mankind *Jews and Gentiles* do by their Works merit only Condemnation, and that none can expect upon them *Absolution*, much less *Reward*. Besides, the *Works* here principally intended are not *all our Works*, nor these, which, if any had, would have the fairest Pretence to merit, *viz. the inward Actings of Grace, Faith, Love, &c.* but *outward Works* that are Evidences of the inward Temper and Frame of the Actors. This is evident from the Word it self, from the particular Instances elsewhere condescended upon, when the *last Judgment* is spoken of, and from the Design of this *general Judgment*.

4. He shews, That this *Retribution* will be *universal, to every one, &c.*

5. He

5. He illustrates further the *Righteousness* of it, *Vers. 7.* by characterizing the Persons who are to be rewarded, they are such as *do well*, that is, whose Actions openly speak them *good*, and evict the *Honesty* of the *Principle* whence they flow; they *continue in Well-doing*, their Walk is uniform and habitually good; flowing from a fix'd Principle, and not from an external accidental Cause; they continue *patiently* in this Course, in Opposition to all Discouragements; nor do they aim at worldly Advantage, but at that *Glory, Honour and Immortality*, which GOD sets before them. None but they, who are *perfectly* such, shall have a *Reward*, if it is sought for, according to the Tenor of the Covenant of Works: And in this Sense not a few, nor they obscure Interpreters do take the Words; as if the Apostle had said, If there be any among you, who have *perfectly obey'd*, ye shall be *rewarded*: But whereas I have clear'd that none of you are such, ye are cut off from any Expectation of *Reward*. But if the *Sincerity of Obedience* is only intended, then the Meaning is, That GOD will of his *Grace*, according to his *Promise*, and not for their *Works*, give the *Reward* to the sincerely obedient; and thereby will openly evince his *Righteousness*, in dealing with them exactly, according to the Tenor of the Covenant, to which they belong; so that no Person, who has any just Claim to *Reward* founded upon either Covenant, shall want it.

6. To clear the *Glory* of GOD's *Righteousness* further, he specifies the *Reward*, viz. *Eternal Life*, a Reward sufficient to compensate any Losses they have been at, evidence GOD's Love to Holiness and his Regard unto his Promises.

7. He, in like Manner, clears the Matter further, by giving a Description *v. 8.* of the Persons, who are to be condemn'd, which evinces the apparent Righteousness of the Sentence to be pass'd against them. They are such, against whom it will be made evident, That they have been *Contentious*, that is, That they have oppos'd and suppress'd the Truths they knew, stiff'd Convictions and *detain'd them in Unrighteousness*: Such as have not *obey'd the Truth*, or walk'd up to their Knowledge, but have obey'd *Unrighteousness*, following the Inclinations of their corrupt Hearts. As if the Apostle had said, The Persons who are to be rewarded are of a Character, that ye can lay no Manner of Claim to, but your Character is perfectly that of those, who are to be condemn'd.

8. He specifies the Punishment, *Indignation and Wrath*.

9. To

9. To fix the Truth and Importance of this deeper upon their Minds, he repeats and enlarges upon this Assertion, v. 9, 10. thereby assuring them that the Matter is infallibly certain, and to give a further Evidence of the *Righteousness of GOD*, he adjects a Clause and repeats it twice over, *viz. First to the Jew and also to the Gentile*, wherein he shews the *Impartiality of GOD's Proceedings*. He will not suffer *one Soul*, who has any just Claim to *Reward*, to go *unrewarded*, be he *Jew or Gentile*. He will not allow *one Sinner*, to whom *Punishment* belongs, to escape *unpunish'd*. The *Jews Privileges shall not save them*, if guilty, but Judgment shall begin first at the House of *GOD*; nor shall the bare Want of Privileges prejudice the *Gentiles*.

10. To confirm this, he adduces an Argument from the *Nature of GOD*, v. 11. *viz.* That with him there's *no Respect of Persons*, that is, no unjust Partiality toward Persons, upon Considerations, that do not belong unto the *Rule*, whereby the Cause is to be try'd.

11. To strengthen this and obviate Objections, v. 12. he asserts, That *GOD* will proceed impartially in judging them according to the most unexceptionable Rule. He will condemn the *Jews* for their Transgressions of that *Law*, which he gave to them. He will condemn the *Gentiles*, not for the Transgression of the *written Law*, which they had not, but for their *Sins* against the *Law of Nature*, which they had. And so neither of them shall have Ground to except against the *Rule*, according to which *GOD* proceeds with them.

12. Hence he takes Occasion, v. 13. to repel an Objection or Plea of the *Jews*, who might fancy that they should not be *punish'd or perish*, to whom *GOD* had given the Privilege of the *written Law*. To cut off this Plea he tells them, That where Persons expect Justification by the *Law*, it's not the *Knowledge of the Law*, or *hearing of it*, but *Obedience* to it that will be sustain'd. Here he does not suppose that any shall be justify'd by *doing the Law*; nay, he proves the contrary. It is manifestly his Design, in the whole Discourse, to do so: But he shews, That the Plea of the *Jews*, that they had the *Law*, is *insufficient*, as if he had said, Be it granted, That Justification is to be had by the *Law*; yet, even upon that Supposition, ye have no Title to it, unless ye perfectly obey it. The *Law* pleads for none, but those who do so. And since none of you do thus obey it, as shall be evinc'd anon, ye must perish, as I said, v. 12.

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13. Whereas

13. Whereas the *Gentiles* might plead, It would be hard Treatment if they should be condemn'd, since they were *without the Law*; he demonstrates, That they could not except against their own Condemnation, upon this Ground, because albeit they wanted the *written Law*, yet they had *another Law*, viz. That of *Nature*; for the Breaches of which they might justly be condemn'd. that they had such a *Law* he proves against them, v. 14, 15. *First* from their *Practice*: He tells them that by the Guidance of *meer Nature* they did the *Works of the Law*, that is, They perform'd the material Part of some of the Duties which the *Law* enjoins, and thereby evidenc'd Acquaintance with the *Law*, or as he words it, *They shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts*, that is, the Remainders of their *natural Light*, or *Reason*, performs the *work of the Law* commanding Duty, and forbidding Sin. *Secondly*, He proves, That they have such a *Law* from the *Working* of their *Conscience*. He whose Conscience accuses him for not doing some Things, and approves him for doing other Things, knows that he was oblig'd to do the one and omit the other, and consequently has some Knowledge of the *Law*. This is the Apostle's Scope, v. 14, 15. So that *For*, in the Beginning of v. 14. refers to and renders a Reason of the first Clause of v. 12. That they who had *sin'd without the Law*, viz. the *written Law*, *shall perish without the Law*, that is, not for violating the *written Law*, which they had not.

14. Having remov'd these Objections, he concludes his Account of the *last Judgment*, v. 16. wherein he gives them an Account to whom it belongs *originally* to judge, it's *GOD*. 2ly, Who the Person is to whom the visible Administration is committed, it's *Jesus Christ*. 3ly, What the Matter of that Judgment is, or what will be judg'd, it's the *Secrets of Hearts*. Albeit *Works* will be insisted upon as *Evidences* for the Conviction of Onlookers of the *Righteousness of GOD*, in his Distribution of *Rewards* and *Punishments*; yet the *Secrets of Men* will also be propos'd, for the further Confusion of Sinners, and Justification of the Severity of *GOD* against them.

II. Now the Apostle having proven, That the *Gentiles* are all under *Condemnation*, and so cannot be justify'd by *any Works* they can do; and having likewise remov'd some Exceptions of the *Jews* that fell in his Way, he proceeds next directly to prove the same against the *Jews* in particular, and answers their Objections from Chap. 2. Vers. 17. to Chap. 3. Vers. 8. *inclusive*.

To prove his Charge against the *Jews*, he makes use only of one Argument, which yet is capable of bearing the Weight of many Conclusions or Inferences. To understand this, we must take notice, That the Apostle here is dealing with *those Jews*, who sought to be *justify'd* by *Works*. And,

1. By Way of Concession, he grants them several Privileges above the *Gentiles* from Verse 17. to Verse 20. *inclusive*, viz. That they were *call'd Jews*; that they had the *Law*, on which they rested, and pretended some *peculiar Interest* in GOD, as being externally in Covenant with him, Verse 17. of which they *boasted*; That they had some Knowledge of the *Law*, and pretended themselves capable of guiding others. This he grants them in a Variety of Expressions, Vers. 18, 19, 20. By which the Apostle secretly taxes their Vanity, and insinuates, That whatever they had in Point of Privilege, they abus'd it.

2. The Apostle charges them with a practical Contradiction to this their Knowledge, and this he makes good against them, particularly against their highest Pretenders, their Teachers, 1. By condescending on several Instances, wherein they were guilty and appealing to their Consciences for the Truth of them, Verses 22, 23. which I shall not insist in explaining. 2. He proves it further by a Testimony of Scripture, Verse 24. wherein GOD complains, That their Provocations were such, as tempted the *Gentiles* to *blaspheme his Name*.

This is the Argument, the Conclusion he leaves to themselves to draw. And indeed it will bear all the Conclusions formerly laid down against the *Gentiles*. Whatever their Knowledge was, they were not *Doers*, but *Breakers* of the *Law*, and so could not be *justify'd* by it, Verse 13. but might expect to *perish* for their Transgressions of it, according to Verse 12. They sinn'd against Knowledge, and so deserv'd as severe Resentments as the *Gentiles*, Chap. 1. Verse 32. They could not pretend *Ignorance*; for they taught others the Contrair and so were without Excuse, Chap. 2. Verse 1.

The Apostle next proceeds to answer their Objections. The first whereof is brought in, Verse 25. The Short of it is this, The *Jews* pretended they had *Circumcision*, the Seal of GOD's Covenant, and so claim'd the Privileges of it. This Objection is not directly propos'd, but the Answer anticipating it is introduc'd as a Confirmation or Reason enforcing the Conclusion aim'd at, viz. That they could not be *justify'd* by the *Law*: And therefore it is, that we find the causal Particle *For* in the Beginning of the Verse. This much for the

Manner, wherein the Objection is introduc'd. To this Objection the Apostle answers,

1. By a Concession, *Circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the Law*, that is, if thou perfectly obey the Commands, then thou mayst in Justice demand the Privileges of the Covenant, and plead the Seal of it, as a Pledge of the Faithfulness of GOD in the Promises.

2. He answers directly by shewing, That this Seal signify'd just Nothing as to their Claim of a regal Righteousness, because they were *Breakers of the Law*. But if thou be a Breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made Uncircumcision. The Short of the Matter is this; This Seal is only a conditional Ingagement of the Faithfulness of GOD: It does not say, Thou shalt get the Privileges whether thou perform the Condition or not: So that by this Means, if the Condition is not perform'd, ye have Nothing to ask, and ye are as remote from a Claim to the Reward, as they who want the Seal.

3. The Apostle, to illustrate and confirm what he had said about the Unprofitableness of Circumcision in Case of Transgression, shews, That a Gentile, upon Supposition that it were possible, obeying the Law, but wanting the Seal of the Covenant, would have a better Title to the Privileges promis'd, than a Jew, who had the Seal, but wanted the Obedience, Verse 26. *Therefore if the Uncircumcision keep the Righteousness of the Law*, that is, If a Gentile should yield that Obedience the Law requires, shall not his Uncircumcision be counted for Circumcision? That is, Shall not he, notwithstanding he wanteth the outward Sign of Circumcision, be allow'd to plead an Interest in the Blessings promis'd to Obedience, and to insist upon the Faithfulness of GOD for the Performance of the Promises made to the Obedient, of which Circumcision is the Sign? The Reason of this is plain, Circumcision seals the Performance of Promise to the Obedient, the Gentile obeying has that, which is the Ground whereon the Faithfulness of GOD is engag'd to perform the Promise, viz. Obedience, and so a real Title to the Thing promis'd, tho' he want the outward Sign: Whereas the disobeying Jew has only the Seal, which secures nothing, but upon the Condition of that Obedience, which he has not yielded. This is only spoken by Way of Supposition, not as if any of the Gentiles had yielded such Obedience: For he has plainly proven the Contrary before. Plainly the Apostle's Reason is this, Circumcision is an Ingagement for the Performance of the Promise to the Obedient. The disobedient Jew has therefore no Title to the Promise; whereas the Gentile that obeys, having

having that *Obedience*, to which the *Promise* is made, has a *real Right* to it, and so might expect the Performance of it, as if he had the *outward Seal*.

4. To clear yet further the *Unprofitableness* of *Circumcision* without *Obedience*; the Apostle, upon the foresaid Supposition, shews, That the *Gentile* obeying wou'd not only have the better Title; but his *Obedience* wou'd signally contribute to the clearing of the *Justice* of GOD, in condemning the *disobedient Jew*, Verse 27. *And shall not Uncircumcision which is by Nature, if it fulfill the Law, judge thee, who by the Letter and Circumcision dost transgress the Law*, that is, if a *Gentile* wanting *Circumcision* and the Security thereby given, with the other Advantages which the *Jews* have, discover the *Inexcusableness* of your *Disobedience*, who have the *Letter* and *Circumcision* or the *written Law*; *id est*, who have a *clearer Rule* of Duty and a *plainer Promise*.

5. To remove quite the Foundation of this Objection, the Apostle clears the real Design of *Circumcision*, and the Character of the Person to whom the Advantages do belong, Verse 28. 29. wherein he shews *negatively*, That the *Jew* to whom the Promises do belong, is not every one who belongs to that Nation, or is outwardly a *Jew*: And that the *Circumcision*, to which the Promises are *absolutely* made, is not the *outward Circumcision*, which is *in the Flesh*, Verse 28. but *positively*, That the *Jew*, to whom the promis'd Blessings belong, is he who is a *Jew inwardly*, that is, who has that inward Frame of Heart which GOD requires of his People; and the *Circumcision*, to which Blessings are *absolutely* promis'd, is that *inward Renovation* of Heart which is the *Principle* of the *Obedience* requir'd by, and accepted of GOD, Verse 29.

This Objection being remov'd out of the Way, the Apostle proceeds to answer an Instance against what he has now said in the three or four first Verses of the 3d Chap. The Objection is propos'd Verse 1. and is in short this, By your Reasoning, wou'd the *Jews* say, we have no *Advantage* beyond the *Gentiles*, and *Circumcision* is utterly unprofitable. To this he answers,

1. By denying flatly what is asserted in the Objection, declaring, That notwithstanding of all this, the *Jews* had every Way the *Advantage*.

2. Left this should appear a vain Assertion, he clears it by an Instance of the highest Consequence, *viz.* That they had the *Oracles* of GOD, which the *Gentiles* wanted, wherein that Relief against Transgressions, which the *Gentiles* were Strangers to, is reveal'd, as he expressly

pressly teaches afterwards, Verse 21. As if the Apostle had said, Tho' ye *Jews* fail of *Obedience*, and so are cut off from *Justification* by the *Law* as a *Covenant of Works*; yet ye have a *Righteousness* reveal'd to you in the *Law* and the *Prophets*, Verse 21. to which the *Sinner* may betake himself for *Relief*; this the *Gentiles* who want the *Law* and the *Prophets* know Nothing of.

3. He clears, That this is a great Advantage, notwithstanding that many of the *Jews* were not the better for it, Verse 3. thus at once anticipating an Objection that might be mov'd, and confirming what he had said. *What if some did not believe*, that is, tho' some have fallen short of the Advantages of this *Revelation*, shall we therefore say it was not in it self a *Privilege*? Nay, it is in it self a *Privilege*, and they by their own Fault in not believing, have forfeited the Advantage of it to themselves only; for shall their *Unbelief* make the *Faith* of *GOD* without Effect? That is, Assuredly Believers will not be the worse dealt with for the *Unbelief* of others; but they will obtain the Advantage of the Promises.

We have insisted much longer upon this Context than was design'd, but we hope that they who consider that the Apostle's Arguments and his whole Purposes, are directly levell'd at that which is the main Scope of these Papers, will not reckon this a faulty Digression. And besides, we shall immediately see the Usefulness of this, in Order to remove the Foundation of a great many Objections drawn from this Context by Mr. *Humfrey*; some of whose Notions we shall consider after we have remov'd one Objection more, and it is this:

VII. The Words of the Apostle *Paul* to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 27. are made use of to this Purpose. The Apostle tells them in the preceding Words, That the *GOD* whom he preach'd, was he who made the *Worlds*, bath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth, and bath determin'd the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation; that they should seek the *LORD*, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live and move and have our Being. The Sum of what is pleaded from this Testimony amounts to this, That Men left to the *Light* of Nature are in Duty bound to seek the *LORD*; that *GOD* is not so far from them, but he may be found; and that if they will feel after him, that is, trace these dark Discoveries of him, in the Works of Creation and Providence, they may happily find him.

For answer to this we say, 1. No Word is here to be stretched further than the Occasion and Scope of the Apostle requires and allows. 2. The Occasion of this Discourse was, That *Paul* being at *Athens*, saw that City set upon the *Worship* of *Idols*, and overlook the *One true GOD*, which mov'd him with Wrath, and gave Occasion to this Discourse: The evident Scope whereof is to shew, That they were to blame, that they overlook'd the *true GOD*, and gave that *Worship* to *Idols*, which was only to be given to *GOD*. For convincing them of this, 3. He clears, That the *true GOD*, by his Works of *Creation* and *Providence* had in so far discovered himself, that if by these Works they sought after the Knowledge of him, they might find him so far, or know so much, as to understand that he alone was the *true GOD*, to whom *divine Worship* was due. 4. He owns, That indeed these Discoveries were but *dark*, to wit, in Comparison of the Discoveries he had made of himself in the *Word*; which is sufficiently intimated by that Expression of *seeking after him*, they might find him, so far as to deliver them from that *gross Idolatry* and *Neglect* of him they were involv'd in. Here is all that the Scope holds out: But he does not say, That they might find him, so as to obtain the saving Knowledge of him by these Works of Providence: But on the contrary he tells, That *GOD winked at the Times of Ignorance*, that is, seem'd as if he did not notice Men, and in his holy and sovereign Justice left them to find by their own Experience, which by any Means they had, that they could not arrive to the saving Knowledge of *GOD*; tho' they might, as has been just now said, have gone so far as to disentangle themselves from that *gross Idolatry* for which he now reprov'd them. He does not say, That *GOD* then called them to saving Repentance, gave them any Discovery of his Purpose of Mercy, and thereon invited them to Peace and Acceptance: But on the contrary, he tells, That now he calls all Men every where to repent, Verse 30. which sufficiently intimates that they had not that Call before. In a Word, 'tis not that seeking or finding of *GOD*, or that Nearness to *GOD* which is here intended, that elsewhere the Scripture speaks of, when it treats about Mens Case who are living under the Gospel, and have *GOD in Christ reveal'd*, and the Gospel Call to turn to, seek after and find him to their own Salvation; as the Scope of the Place fully clears. Any one that would see this Plate fully considered, may find it done by the learn'd Dr. Owen, in that accurate, tho' short Digression concerning universal Grace, insert in his *Theolog. Pantodap.* Pag. 33. There likewise is that other Scripture

ture, *Acts* 14. v. 15, 16, 17. largely considered. On which I shall not now insist, seeing there is Nothing in it that has the least Appearance of Opposition to what we have asserted, if not that GOD is there said, *not to have left himself without Witness* among the Nations, in as much as he *did good to them, gave them fruitful Seasons, &c.* This is all granted; but these Necessaries of Life are no Witness that GOD design'd for them *Mercy and Forgiveness*, as has been made appear above, and as the Spirit of GOD tells us there; for GOD *suffered them to walk in their own Ways.*

VIII. Some alledge, That there is a *Law of Grace connatural* to Man in his *lapsed State*, and that in Substance it is this, *That GOD will pardon Sinners upon their Repentance:* And they tell us, That this *Law of Grace* is as much written in the Heart of *lapsed Man*, as the *Law of Nature* was writ in the Heart of *innocent Man.*

Peace. Disquis. Ch. To this Purpose speaks Mr. *Humfrey* in his *Peaceable Disquisitions*, and that with such an Air of Confidence, as might make one expect better Proof than he has offer'd.

We shall just now examine Mr. *Humfrey's* Arguments. As to the Notion it self of a *connatural Law of Grace written in the Hearts of all Mankind in this lapsed Condition*, we look upon it as absolutely false. It contradicts *Scripture, Reason* and *Experience.* My Design excuseth me from the Use of *Scripture* Arguments. *Experience* I need not insist upon, after what has been already said. *Reason* will not allow us to call any *Law connatural* to Man, save upon one of these three Accounts; either, because we are born with *actual Knowledge* of it; or, because it lies *so open* and is *so suited* to our *rational Faculties*, that any Man, who has the Use of Reason, can scarce miss thinking of it, or, at least, refuse his Assent to it, when it's propos'd to him; or finally because it's *nearly connected* with Notions and Principles that are *self-evident*, and is easily deducible from them. Now this Discovery of *Mercy* to Sinners meerly upon *Repentance* is *connatural* in none of these Senses.

Essay of Humane Understand. Lib. 1. I know no Truth that is *connatural* in the first Sense. The ingenious Mr. *Lock* has said enough against this. In the *second* Sense, it is not *connatural.* Who will tell me, That this is a *self-evident Proposition*, while so great a Part of the more knowing and judicious Part of Mankind, not only refuse their Assent to it, but reject it as a plain Untruth? Yea, I doubt if any Man that understands the Case,

Case, and knows Nothing of the *Satisfaction of Christ*, will give his Assent to it. In the last *Sense* it is not *Connatural*; for if it were so, it were easily demonstrable by these *self-evident Principles*, to which it is nearly all'd: Which when Mr. *Humfrey* shall have demonstrated from these Principles, or any other for him, we shall then consider it; but this I am apprehensive will never be done. In a Word, all these Truths, which with any tolerable Propriety of Speech can be call'd *connatural*, if they are not *self-evident*, are yet such, as admit of an easy Demonstration. And it is foolish to call any Truth *connatural*, unless it is such, as either needs no Proof, or is easily demonstrable. This is sufficient to overthrow this Notion.

Before we consider the Arguments which Mr. *Humfrey* advances for his Opinions, I shall offer to the Reader a more full View of it in his own Words. He then asserts, "That there is a *connatural Law of Grace* written in the Heart of Man, that is,
 "That this *Law* of lapsed Nature, this *Law of* *Peace. Disquis. Ch.*
 "Grace, or remedying *Law*, is written in the *4. Pag. 56, 57.*
 "Heart of Man in Regard of his fallen Nature,
 "no less than the *Law of pure Nature* it self was. The *Law of Nature*,
 "says he, as I take it, is the *Dictates of right Reason, declaring to us*
 "our Duty to GOD, to our selves and to our Neighbours; and the *Light*
 "of the same Reason will dictate to us, when we have fail'd in that
 "Duty, to repent and turn to GOD with trusting to his Mercy and
 "Pardon if we do so, and not else. We do find it legible in our Hearts,
 "That GOD is Good and wisely Gracious to consider our lost
 "Estate, and pity our Infirmities and necessary Frailty. After he
 "has told us of a *threefold Promulgation* of this *Law of Grace*, under the
 "Patriarchs, by Moses and Christ, which he calls *three Editions of the same*
 "*Law*; he subjoins, "Now I say, That tho' the Heathen be not under
 "(or have not) *this Law of Grace*, in the *third* and *last* setting out,
 "or in the State under the *Gospel*; yet they are under it (or have
 "it) in the State of the Ancients, or as they had it in the *first Pro-*
 "*mulgation*; and upon Supposition that any of them do, according to
 "the *Light* they have, live up in Sincerity to *this Law*, I dare not be
 "the Man that shall deny, but through the Grace of our Lord Jesus
 "Christ (procuring this *Law* or *Covenant* for them, as for us and all
 "the World) they shall be saved even as we. And a little before he
 "says, "These Characters thus engraven in the Heart of Man, is the
 "[A] "same

“ same *Law of Grace* in its *practical Contents*, which is more largely
 “ paraphras’d upon in the *Scriptures*.

Surely the Apostle *Paul* had a very different Notion of the State of the Heathen World from this Gentleman, when he tells us emphatically, *That they are Strangers from the Covenants of Promise*, that *they are without GOD*, that is, without the saving Knowledge of GOD; for another Sense the Word will scarce bear; that *they are without Christ, without Hope, afar off, &c.* But its not my Design to offer Scripture Arguments against this Anti-scriptural Divinity. I leave this to others, and proceed to his Proof: Nor shall I in the Consideration of them take Notice of every Thing that might be justly quarrell’d; but only hint at the main Faults.

I. He reasons to this Effect, If there is no *connatural Law of Grace* written in the Heart of Man, then none of those who liv’d before *Moses* could be saved, in as much as there was

Ibid. Pag. 56. then no other *Law* by which they could be saved.

This Argument he borrows from *Suarez*, and concludes it triumphantly thus, “ Which is a Truth so evident, as
 “ makes the Proof of that *Law*, by that Reason alone to be good.

But for all this Commendation, I think this Argument has a double Fault. 1. It proves not the Point, *viz.* That there is a *Law of Grace* written in the Hearts of *all Men* by Nature; but only that there was such a *Law* written in their Hearts who were sav’d. 2. This Argument is built upon a Supposition that’s plainly false, *viz.* That there was no other Way that they could be saved, but by the *Law of Grace* written in their Hearts. This, I say, is false; for they were saved by the *Gospel Discovery of Christ* in the *Promise reveal’d* to them by GOD; and wherein the Generality of the LORD’s People were more fully instructed by the *Patriarchs*, who were *Preachers of Righteousness*. And this *Revelation and Preaching* was to them instead of the *written Word*. Thus we see this mighty Argument proves just Nothing.

II. He reasons from *Abraham’s* pleading with GOD on Behalf of the righteous Men in *Sodom*. Here he thinks it evident,

Ibid. Pag. 60. That there were righteous Men. He proves, That there were none righteous then,

according to the *Tenor* of the *Covenant of Works*, and therefore concludes, That these righteous Persons did belong to, and were dealt with and according to the *Covenant of Grace*. But now what does all this prove? Does it prove that these Men were under the *Covenant of Grace*, and

that

that they were dealt with according to the *Tenor* of it? Well, I grant it. But what will he infer from this, That therefore *all the World* were under the *Covenant of Grace*, or shall be dealt with according to it's *Tenor*? I would have thought that one who has read *Suarez*, might know that this Conclusion will not follow. If there had been any righteous Men in *Sodom*, it's true they were under the *Covenant of Grace*; and I add, If there be any such in the World, they are under it; therefore all the World are so? Who sees not that this will not follow? Again, Supposing, That there were righteous Men in *Sodom*, how will Mr. *Humfrey* prove, That they had no other *Rule of their Life*, or *Ground of their Hope*, but his *connatural Law of Grace*? Why might they not have *Revelation*? Was not *Abraham*, to whom GOD reveal'd himself, and made so many gracious Promises, well known to some in *Sodom*? Might not the Fame of such a Person so near, easily reach them? Was not he the Deliverer of *Sodom* some eighteen Years before, and did not *Lot* his Friend, who was well acquainted with the *Revelations* made to *Abraham*, live in *Sodom*?

III. Mr. *Humfery* tells us, That the *Law of Grace* was in *Adam's* and *Noah's Time* publish'd *Ibid. Pag. 62.* to all the World, and that it never was repeal'd, and therefore all the World are still under it, and so in a *Capacity of Salvation*.

But 1. This, were it granted, will not prove Mr. *Humfrey's connatural Law of Grace*. The Gospel is reveal'd to all the Inhabitants of *England*; therefore the *Law of Grace* is written in all their Hearts: He must know very little of many People in *England*, who will admit the Consequence. 2. Nor will it prove, That all the World are under the *Gospel Revelation*, even in its first Edition, to use Mr. *Humfrey's* Words. Suppose GOD once reveal'd to the World, when it was compriz'd in the Family of *Noah*, the *Covenant of Grace*, and so all this little World had the *external Revelation*: Will Mr. *Humfery* hence infer, That all the Descendants of *Noah*, after so long a Tract of Time, in so many different Nations, have still the *same Revelation*? If he do, the Consequence is nought. It is as sure as any Thing can be, That very quickly most of the Descendants of *Noah* lost in so far that *Revelation*, or at least, corrupted it with their *vain Additions* to that Degree, that it cou'd be of Advantage to no Man. 3. Nor will what Mr. *Humfrey* talks of his *Repeal* help out his Argument. To deprive a People of the Advantage of an *external Revelation*, there is no need of a *formal*

Repeal by a publish'd Statute; it is enough that Men by their *Wickedness* lose all Remembrance of it, and suffer it to fall into Desuetude, and GOD sees not meet to renew the *Revelation* to them or their Posterity.

Ibid. Pag. 62.

IV. Mr. *Humfrey* will prove his Point by a *Syllogism*, and it runs thus, *The Doers of the Law are justify'd, Rom. 2. Ver. 13. But the Gentiles are Doers of the Law; Ergo, some of the Gentiles are justify'd before GOD.*

The Conclusion of this Argument is the direct *Antithesis* of that Position, which the Apostle makes it his Business in that whole Context to prove, as is evident from the Account already given of that Context. This is pretty bold. But let us see how he proves his *Minor*. This he pretends to do from *Rom. 2. 14.* Where it's said, That the *Gentiles do by Nature the Things contain'd in the Law*, and so are *Doers of the Law*, and consequently shall be *justify'd*.

Well, Is this the Way that this Gentleman interprets *Scripture* upon other Occasions? I hope not. He has no Regard to the *Scope* or *Design* of the Apostle's Discourse. All that the Apostle says here, is, That the *Gentiles* are in so far *Doers of the Law*, that their Doing is Proof that they have *some Knowledge* of it: The Persons who here are said to be *Doers of the Law*, are the very same Persons of whom the Apostle says, Verse 12. That they *shall perish without the Law*. But we have fully clear'd this Context before, and thither I refer the Reader.

But Mr. *Humfrey* reforms his Argument, and makes it run thus, He who *sincerely keeps the Law*, shall be *justify'd* according to that of our LORD, *Keep the Commandments, if thou wilt enter into eternal Life*; and that of the Apostle, *GOD will render eternal Life to every one that patiently continues in well-doing*: But subsumes he, *Some Gentiles keep the Law sincerely*: And therefore 'tis according to the Gospel, which requires not the *Rigour*, but accepts of *sincere Obedience*.

As to our Author's Major, if the Meaning of it be, That we shall be *justify'd before GOD* for, or upon our *sincere Obedience*, according to the Gospel, I crave Leave to differ from him; nor will the Scriptures adduc'd by him prove it in this Sense. The *First* is a Reference of a young Man to the *Covenant of Works*, who was not seeking *Salvation*, but *eternal Life* by *Doing*, in Order to discover to him his *own Inability* and

and his need of Christ. But as to this Commentators may be consulted. The other Text I have clear'd above.

His *Minor* I flatly deny: Well, but our Author will prove it by a new Syllogism, which runs thus, He who yields *such Obedience* as the *Jews*, who are circumcis'd in Heart, do, yields that *sincere Obedience*, upon which the *Gospel* accepts and justifies Men: But the *Gentiles*, or some of them yield *such Obedience*.

I have already entred my Dissent against the last Clause of the *Major*, viz. *That the Gospel justifies Men on sincere Obedience*; but it's my Design to debate the Point of *Justification* with our Author at this Time, and so I let this Proposition pass: Yet I again deny the *Minor*, which our Author essays to prove thus, That some of the *Gentiles* do obey in *that Sense*, in which the *Jews*, who are circumcis'd inwardly or in Heart, do obey: This he pretends to demonstrate from the Apostle's Words, *Rom. 2. 26, 27. Therefore if the Uncircumcision keep the Righteousness of the Law, &c. and shall not Uncircumcision, which is by Nature, if it fulfill the Law. &c.*

But where will our Author find the Proof of his *Minor* in these Words? There is nothing like it, unless he take the Antecedent of a hypothetick Proposition, for a plain Assertion. But this Antecedent needs not be allow'd possible, and yet the Apostle's Words and his Assertion would hold good, and all that he aims at be reach'd. Every one knows, That in such Propositions, it's only the *Connexion* that is asserted. As for the Meaning of the Text, I have shew'd before that it is not for our Author's Purpose.

V. But our Author has another Argument, which he thinks is clearer than all the rest, and *professes himself perfectly stricken with the Evidence of it, as with a Beam of Light never to be withstood, or any more to be doubted.* Well this *Ibid. Pag. 63, 64.*

mighty Argument runs thus, "If this was the chief Advantage the *Jew* had over the *Gentile*, That one had the Oracles of *GGD*, and the other had not, then was there not this Difference between them, That one is only in a *State of Nature*, and the other in a *State of Grace*; or that one was in a *Capacity*, and the other under an *Impossibility* of Salvation. For this were an Advantage of a far greater Nature. But this was the chief Advantage, *Rom. 3. 2. Chiefly because to them were committed the Oracles of GOD*; Ergo.

I must

I must confess, That I am not stricken with so much Evidence upon the Proposal of this Argument, as it seems our Author was. To me this Argument appears a plain Sophism. That the *Jews* had the *Oracles of GOD*, was a greater Advantage, than our Author seems to think it. And while the Apostle calls it the *chief Advantage* of the *Jews* above the *Gentiles*, that they had the *Oracles of GOD*, how will our Author infer from this, That they were upon an equal Foot as to the Means *absolutely necessary* for Salvation; or which is the same, as to a *Capacity* of Salvation; for certainly he that wants the Means *absolutely necessary* to Salvation is not *capable* of Salvation, in that Sense that belongs to our Purpose? For my Part I would draw the quite contrary Conclusion from it; thus, the *Jews* had this Privilege above the *Gentiles*, That they had the *Oracles of GOD* intrusted with them, wherein the only Way of Salvation is reveal'd, *being witness'd to by the Law and the Prophets*, Rom. 3. 21. and therefore had Access to Salvation: Whereas on the other Hand, the *Gentiles* wanting *divine Revelation*, which *alone* can discover that *Righteousness*, whereby a *Sinner* can be *justify'd*, did want the Means *absolutely necessary* to Salvation, and so were not in a *Capacity* of Salvation. Now where is our Author's boasted of Demonstration? The Occasion of his Mistake is this, he once inadvertently suppos'd, That these two Advantages, *divine Revelation* and *Access to Salvation* were quite different, and that the one was not included in the other. But of this enough.

Mr. *Humfrey*, I know, may say, They had the *Law of Grace in their Hearts*. But that is the Question. Our Author asserts this; but he does so without Book. We have all this While been seeking Proof of this: Hitherto we have meet with none. We have meet with some Scriptures interpreted or wrested into a Sense plainly inconsistent with the *Scope* and *Intendment*, without any Regard had to the *Context* and *Drift* of the Discourse, which is no safe Way of managing Scriptures.

Next, He insists upon the Story of the *Ninevites Repentance*. They were *without the Church*; it was a *Law of Grace* which led them to *repent*. But had not the *Ninevites divine Revelation*? Did they not *repent at the preaching of Jonah*? How will our Author prove that *Jonah* never drop'd a Word, and that there was a Possibility of stopping the Progress of the Controversy by their turning from their evil Courses? Did not *Jonah* apprehend, That the Event would be a
further

further Forbearance? But may be some may say, *Jonah* had no Mind they should be spar'd, and therefore would not drop any Incouragement: But we know it was not of Choice that he went there; and as he went there in Obedience to GOD, so no Doubt, he who had been so sharply disciplin'd for Disobedience, would speak what the LORD commanded him. Again, had they Assurance of Pardon or eternal Salvation upon their *Repentance*? Was it *Gospel-repentance*? Or did it reach further than a *Forbearance* of temporal Judgments?

Well, but the Instance of *Cornelius* seems more pat to his Purpose. He was a *Gentile*, was accepted with GOD; and *Peter* tells, That in every Nation he that fears GOD and works Righteousness, is accepted. But who will assure me that *Cornelius* was a Stranger to the Scriptures? Did he not know them? Did he not believe them? How could that be? It's plain he was a Profelyte and imbrac'd the *Jews Religion* as to its Substance, and that he did believe, since he pleas'd GOD and was accepted. Now we know, that without Faith it is impossible to please GOD. What wanted he then? Why he wanted to be inform'd that the *Messiah* promis'd was come, and that *Christ Jesus* was He. As to what the Apostle says of GOD's Acceptance of Persons of all Nations, any one that will give himself the Trouble of considering his Scope, and the Circumstances of the Place, will see, That it is nothing else but a Comment upon the Design of the *Vision* he got to instruct him, That now GOD was to admit Persons of all Nations, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, to a Participation of the Covenant Blessings.

DIGRESSION

DIGRESSION.

A short Digression concerning GOD's Government of the Heathen World, occasion'd by the foregoing Objections, wherein an Attempt is made to account for the Occurrences that have the most favourable Aspect to them, without supposing any Intendment or Design of their Salvation, which is adjected as an Appendix to the Answers given to Mr. Humfrey's Objections, wherein it is made evident, That there is no need to suppose the Heathens under a Law or Government of Grace.

IF I should here stop, the Persons, with whom I have to do, might possibly alledge, That the main Strength of *their Cause* remains untouch'd, and the most straitning Difficulty that presses *ours* is not notic'd. The Short of the Matter is, They enquire, *What Government are the Heathen World under?* They conceive it must be allow'd a *Government of Grace*, since they are not dealt by according to the *Demerit* of their *Sins*: Possibly we might propose some Questions that would be no less hard to satisfy by those who talk of an *universal Law of Grace*: But this would not remove the Difficulty, tho' it might embarrass the Opposers of our Sentiments. I shall therefore open my Mind in this Matter, and offer what occurs on this Head. If I mistake, it will plead somewhat for me, That the Subject, so far as I know, is not usually spoken of by others, and I have not of Choice meddled with it, but was led to it by my Subject, that requires some Consideration of it. If we state right Thoughts in this Matter, it will give Light to many Things, that otherwise are dark. What I have to say, I shall propose in the subsequent Gradation.

I. Man was originally made under a *Law* that is *holy, good, righteous, equal and just*: This *Law* exacted of all subjected to it *exact, punctual and perfect Obedience*; and for its Preservation it was arm'd with a
penal

penal Sanction, answerable to the high and tender Regard, which the infinitely Holy, Wise and Great GOD had for the Honour of that *Law*, that was the *Declaration of his Will*, bare the Impress of his *Authority* and *Representation* of all his *moral Excellencies*. And besides all this, he also propos'd a *Reward*, suitable to his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*, for which his *Faithfulness* became Pledge. It is not needful to lanch out in Proof of the several Branches of this Assertion. That Man was made under a *Law*, is question'd by none, but *Atheists*; and they have their Mouths sufficiently stopp'd of old and late by many Persons of Worth and Learning. That this *Law* is *holy, just* and *good*, cannot without notable Injury to the *Deity*, be deny'd. That it exacted *perfect Obedience*, is so evident, that no Person, who thinks what he says, can deny it. A *Law* not requiring *perfect Obedience* to its own Precepts, is a *Law* not requiring, what it requires, which is plain Nonsense. A *posterior Law* may not require *perfect Obedience* to a *prior*: But every *Law* requires *perfect Obedience* to it self. That this *Law* was arm'd with a *penal Sanction* is evident from the *Wisdom of the Law-giver*, who could not enact *such Laws*, which he knew Men would transgress, without providing for the *Honour* of his own *Authority*. Besides, if there is no *penal Sanction*, it is not to be expected that *Laws* could ever reach their *End*, especially as Things have always stood with Man. But were all those Proofs given up, the Effects of *vindictive Justice* in the World, with the Fears that Sinners are under, lest all these are only the Beginning of Sorrows, sufficiently confirm this Truth, and moreover assure us, that it is such a Penalty as suits every Way the Offence in its Nature and Aggravations. But I know none of those Things will be question'd by those, whom we have mainly under View at present.

II. All the Children of Men, in all Ages and in all Places of the World, have been and are guilty of Violations of *this Law*. We have heard the *Deists* owning this before; and *Christians* will not deny it. *Deists* would have thought it their Interest to deny it: But since, it's unquestionable that the Generality offend, in Instances past reck'ning. If they had affirm'd, That any one did, in no Instance offend, they might have been requir'd to make good their Assertion: But this they could not do. They durst not condescend. And therefore it must be own'd that the *best*, not in *one Instance*, but in *many* violate this *Law*.

III. Upon account of *these Violations* of his *holy* and *righteous Law*, all Mankind, every Individual, and every Generation of Men, that have liv'd in the World, are obnoxious to *Justice*. By those Sins they have forfeit any Claim they might have laid to the *Reward* of perfect *Obedience*, and are liable to the *Penalty* in the *Sanction* of the *Law*. And GOD might, at any Time, have righteously inflicted it, either upon any *Individual* or any *whole Race* of Men. I determine not now what that *Punishment* was. They who talk our Offences are small, and extenuate them, seem scarcely impress'd with suitable Notions of GOD. And I doubt will not be sustain'd Judges competent of the Qualities of Offences and Injuries done to his Honour. But whatever the *Punishment* is, *eternal*, or *not*, which I dispute not now, because we agree about it with those, whom we now have under Consideration, 'tis certain none can prove, That it is all confin'd to *Time*, or that any *temporal Punishment* is *sufficient* for the least Offence that is committed against GOD. And it is also clear, That, upon one's *sinning*, the *Penalty* might be presently inflicted, without any Injustice, provided the *penal Sanction* were suitable and just in its Constitution, as of Necessity it must be, where GOD *made the Law* and *constitute the Punishment*.

IV. Albeit GOD righteously might have cut off any Generation of Men, and swept the Earth clean; yet has he seen meet to spare Sinners even Multitudes of them for a long Time. A Piece of Conduct truly astonishing! Especially it would appear so, if we understood how much GOD *hates Sin*. The only Reason why the *Heathen World* hath not admir'd it more, and been more extensive in their Enquiries into the Reasons of it, is, because they had but very short and imperfect Notions of GOD's *Holiness*, and the *Evil* of *Sin*. They took notice of GOD's *Forbearance* of some notorious Offenders. Some of them were stumbled at it, and some of them endeavour'd to account for it. But the Wonder of GOD's sparing a World, full of Sinners, was little notic'd, and tho' they had observ'd it, they would have quickly found themselves as much at a Loss here, as any where else. The Scriptures have not gratify'd the Curiosity of Men with such a full Account, as our vain Minds would have desir'd, that are too forward to question him particularly about his Ways, who gives an Account of none of his Matters: Yet some Reasons of this Conduct are dropp'd that may satisfy the humble. I. GOD made a *Covenant* with *Adam*, wherein his *Posterity*, as well as himself were concern'd and included. They
were

were to be *Gainers* or *Losers* as he acquit himself well or ill. This Transaction, I know, is deny'd by some *Christians*. I shall not dispute the Matter with them: Others have done it. I now take it for granted. And if they will not suppose it, it's but the Loss of this Reason. And let them if they can, put a better in its Room. Upon Supposition, That there was such a Transaction, and that it was just, as we must allow all to be, whereof GOD is the Author. It was not only *equal*, but in Point of Wisdom, *apparently necessary*, or, at least, *highly suitable*, That all concern'd in this Transaction should be brought into *Being*, to reap the Fruits of it. But this was impossible if the World had not been spar'd. 2. GOD, in sparing the World, had a *Design of Mercy* upon some. And many of them were to proceed from some of the worst Sinners. He design'd to save some in all Ages, and in most Places. Their Progenitors must therefore, of Necessity, be kept alive. He bears with the provoking Carriage of evil Men; because out of their Loins he intends to extract others, whom he will form for the *Glory of his Grace*. 3. GOD is patient towards Sinners, to manifest the *Equity* of his *future Justice* upon them. When Men are spar'd and continue in Sin, the Pleas of *Infirmity* and *Mistake* are cut off, and they are *convict of Malice*. They are silenc'd and On-lookers satisfy'd, that *Severity* is justly exercis'd on them. *Quanto Dei magis Judicium tardum est, tanto magis justum*. As *Patience*, while it is exercis'd, is the *Silence* of his *Justice*; so when it is *abus'd*, it *silences* Mens Complaints against his *Justice*. Other Reasons of this Conduct we might glean from the Scriptures: But my Design allows me not to insist: Nor indeed do they descend so low as to satisfy curious *Wits*. *Lo these are Parts of his Ways and Aims, but how little a Portion is heard*, that is, even by *Revelation, known of him?* says *Job*, Chap. 26. 14.

V. The World, or Sinners in it are spar'd, not by a proper *Reprive*, that is, a Delay of Punishment, after the Offenders are taken up, question'd, try'd, convicted, and solemnly condemn'd; the Way, Manner and Time of their Punishment fix'd, by a *judicial Application* of the *general Threatning* of the Law in this particular Case, by the Judge competent, and the Sentence plainly intimated; a Delay of the Execution after this, if it is of the Judge's proper Motion, if the Offender is not imprison'd, if he is employ'd, and if Favours are conferr'd upon him, and Obedience requir'd of him, gives Hopes of Impunity and Escape; and if the Persons commit not new Offences,

without, at least, an Appearance of Insincerity, they are scarce wont to be condemn'd upon the first Sentence: But Sinners are spar'd by a *Forbearance*, or wise and just *Connivance*, if the Word would not offend. The *Governour* of the World knows and sees the Carriage of Sinners, is aware of their Sins, and keeps Silence for a Time; but yet keeps an Eye upon them, calls them not into Question, puts off the Trial, takes them not up, as it were, and winks at them. Now all this may be justly done for a Time; the Sinners may be employ'd, and Acts of Bounty, for holy and wise Ends, may be conferr'd on them, and exercis'd towards them, and that without the least Injustice, without any Design of *pardoning*; as the Sequel of this Discourse will more fully clear.

VI. This *Forbearance* of GOD is *Wise, Just and Holy*: For 1. He is the only competent Judge, as to the *Time* of punishing Offenders. It cannot be made appear, That he may not *thus delay*, even where he has no Thought of *pardoning*. 2. It implies *no Approbation* of the Faults formerly committed, or those they may commit, during this Interval of Time, since he has sufficiently testify'd against them, by the *Laws* he has made, which forbid them, by the *Penalty* he has annex'd to those *Laws*, and by *Examples* of his Severity upon others, which have not been wanting in any Generation. These may sufficiently acquit him; however, for a Time, he keep silent and conceal, as it were, his Knowledge of the Offences of some, or his Resentments against them, on Account of them. 3. He accomplishes Purposes worthy of him; which are sufficient to justify him in this Conduct, while he keeps Silence, and carries to them, as if there were no Offence, or he knew none, and they go on in their Rebellion or secret Practices against his *Law and Government*. Impudent Offenders have no Place left, either for Denial or Excuse of their Crimes, or Complaints against the Severity of his Resentments. Spectators are made to see, That it is not *Infirmity* or *Mistake*, but *fix'd Alienation* or *Enmity* that is so sharply punish'd. He serves himself of them, and makes them, tho' they *mean not so*, carry on the Designs of his Glory, either in helping or trying, or bringing into *Being* Persons, whom he has Design of Mercy upon. And sure he may justly do this, since not only he has the best Title to their Obedience; but he has all the Reason and Right in the World to use that *Life*, while he spares it, for what Purposes he pleases, which they have forfeited to *Justice*. Who can blame him, if sometimes he spares secret Plotters, and lets
them

them go on till their Plots are sufficiently rip'ned for their Conviction, and others Satisfaction. Nor is there any Ground to quarrel, if he deal even with the Worst, as equal Judges do with the Mother guilty of some manifest Crime; they not only spare and delay the Execution, till the Child whom they design Mercy to, is brought forth; but do not take notice of her, or intimate even a Purpose of Punishment, till the Child is brought forth, lest the Child should suffer by the Mother's Despair and Grief. 4. This is yet more remarkably just in GOD, who can on the one Hand secure the *Criminal*, so that Justice shall not suffer by the Delay, and on the other, that the *Criminal* shall not run out into those Impieties, that would cross the *Ends*, endanger the *Safety*, or wrong the *Reputation* of his *Government*, with those who are capable of making an equal Estimate of Things.

VII. It was every Way suitable and necessary that the Persons thus spar'd, should be continu'd under a *moral Government*. They were not to be rul'd by meer Force; 1. Because they are, while under such a *Forbearance*, capable of some Sort of a *moral Government*. When a Prince deals with Persons, whom he knows to be on treasonable Plots against his Government, and conceals his Resentments, he still manages them as Subjects, and continues them under a *Government*; nor is he faulty in doing so. 2. They are not, while under such a *Forbearance*, capable of any other Government; for if once the *Ruler of the World* begin to deal in a Way of Force and Justice with them, then this *Forbearance* is at an End. 3. It were a manifest Reproach to the *Governour of the World*, if they were suppos'd under no *Government* at all. Besides, on this Supposition, the *Ends* of his *Forbearance* could not be reach'd. And moreover, the *moral Dependance* of *Creatures* on their *Creator*, which can only be maintain'd either in this Way, or by putting them under the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*, would be dissolv'd, which cannot be admitted.

VIII. Sinners under this Dispensation are still under the *Law of Creation*: It's true this *Law* can no longer be the Means of conveying a Title to the great and principal Reward; but that is their own Fault, and not the *Governour's* nor the *Law's*. But notwithstanding of this, they are still under it, and it continues the *Instrument* of GOD's Government over them. For 1. The Ground of Obedience still continues, albeit some of the *Motives*, yea, the principal *Incouragement*, I mean, *eternal Rewards*, are forfeited. The Obligation to Obedience can never otherwise be dissolv'd, than by the inflicting of a capital *Punishment*, which

which puts out of all Possibility of yielding any Obedience. Some, I know, make the *Power* and *Right* of obliging, to consist *meerly* in a *Power* of *Rewarding* and *Punishing*: But this is easily evicted of Falseness: And albeit the learn'd Mr. *Gastrel* has advanc'd this, in his Sermons at *Boil's Lecture*, yet we have no Reason to receive it, as *Beconsal* in his Treatise of the *Law of Nature*, and others have sufficiently clear'd. 2. This *Law* is *sufficient* to answer the Designs of this *Forbearance*, and GOD's *Rule* over them, who live under it and by it. It has not lost its *directive Power*; but it is able sufficiently to instruct, at least, in these Duties, either as to GOD, our selves, or others, that are of absolute Necessity to keep up some Order and Decorum in the World, carry on regularly the Propagation of Mankind and the like. It is manifestly *sufficient* to be a *Test* to try Men's *Willingness* to obey, and convince Men of *Wilfulness* in their Rebellion; and to be a *standing Monument* of GOD's *Holiness*: Yea, it continues to have that Force upon the Consciences of the Generality, as to be a Check to keep them from running into Enormities subversive of all Order and Society, and destructive to the other Ends of GOD's *Patience*. 3. Experience fully clears, That Men still pay Regard to *this Law*, and this is the *only Law* that Men destitute of a *Revelation*, own.

IX. While GOD saw meet to continue this *Forbearance*, it was not necessary nor suitable, That he should *plainly*, *particularly* and *solemnly* intimate all the Length he design'd to carry his Resentments against Offenders. 1. There was no Necessity of this towards the clearing of GOD's *Holiness*; this being sufficiently done by the *Promulgation* of the *Law*, its *Penalty* and many particular *Examples*. 2. This would have undone the *Dispensation* whereof we have been speaking. 3. This is utterly inconsistent with all the Designs of it. Men had been driven into Despair, and so all *moral Government* had been dissolv'd.

X. Yea, it was consistent with his *Holiness*, and suitable to his *Wisdom*, to permit Men to *fall into Sin*, very great Sins, and for a Time to go on in them. GOD can neither do any Thing that is *unworthy*, nor omit any Thing that is *worthy* of him, of a *moral Kind*. And it is certain in Fact, That *such Sins* and *Enormities* he has permitted: And therefore, however strange it appears to us, that a holy GOD, who could have *restrain'd*, should *permit* those Things; yet since he, who can do no *Evil*, has done it, we must conclude this altogether consistent with his *Holiness*. And it is manifestly so with his *Wisdom*, since no Injury is done to his *Holiness*. For 1. By this Means Sinners give
full

full Proof, what a Height their Firmity against GOD is come to. 2. They are the Meeter to exercise his own People. And 3. They are the riper for the Strokes he designs to inflict on them.

XI. Notwithstanding of all this, it was *meet* and *necessary* that some *Offenders* should be *remarkably punish'd*, and some Bounds set to *Offences*; and more especially, those *Offences* which cross the Designs of GOD's *Forbearance*, and tend to dissolve the *Government* and *Order*, which it was necessary GOD should maintain in the World. And hence it has come to pass, That not the greatest Sins, such as these certainly are, which immediately strike against GOD; but these, which strike against *Order* and *Government*, have been most remarkably punish'd in all Ages, as might be made appear by innumerable Instances of the remarkable Punishments of *Murders*, *Treasons*, and *Undutifulness* to Parents. This is congruous to *Justice*, not only on the mention'd Account; but on this, That the *Articles* concerning these last Sort of *Evils*, are much more clear in most Instances, than those which respect the Former.

XII. It is every Way suitable to the *Wisdom*, *Sincerity* and *Holiness* of GOD; yea, and of absolute Necessity to the *Design* of this *Forbearance*, that he exercise *Bounty* in lesser Things; such as the good Things of this Life are: And that he vouchsafe those mental Enduements to some of the *spar'd Sinners*, which are necessary toward the Maintenance of that *Government*, which GOD was to keep up among them; such are *civil Wisdom*, *Invention*, *Courage*, &c. These he may give without the least Intimation of any Design of *special Mercy*. For what Relation have these Things to *special Mercy*, which are heap'd in Abundance on the worst of Men. However, that it was fit these Things should be bestow'd upon some in this Case, is evident, because 1. *Eternal Rewards* are now forfeited, and there would have been Nothing to induce to *Obedience* if this had not been. 2. Hereby he gives a Witness to his own *Goodness*, which aggravates Offences committed against him. 3. Hereby he draws on Men to *Obedience*, or rather to do those Pieces of Service, which are in their own Nature, such as he allows and requires, albeit they design not his Service, but their own Pleasure and Profit. 4. Hereby he quits Scores with Sinners, while he suffers not what is even but *pretended Service*, to pass without a *Reward*, which is sufficient to shew what a kind Rewarder he would have been, if they had indeed obey'd. 5. Hereby he cuts off all Excuse or their Continuance in *Disobedience*. 6. This Conduct gives them an innocent Occasion of discovering *latent Wickedness*, which otherwise they would have

have had no Access to shew, and keeps from that utter Despair, which would have marr'd the Design of GOD's *Forbearance*.

XIII. These Vouchsafements of *divine Bounty* lead to a Sort of *Repentance*, not that to which the *Promise of Pardon* is join'd in the Gospel. For 1. They give eminent Discoveries of the *Goodness* of that GOD whom we have offended, and consequently of the *Folly* of offending him, which naturally leads to *Sorrow* or *Regret*. 2. They strengthen, as all Benefits do, the *original Obligation* to *Obedience*. 3. They let us see, That *Obedience* is not altogether fruitless, since they may expect less severe Resentments if they return; yea, may expect some Share in this *Bounty*, and are not under an *Impossibility of Mercy*, for any Thing they can know.

XIV. After all, I do yet see no Reason to think, That they, who are *meerly* under such a *Dispensation* as this, which I take to be the Case of the *Heathen World*, are under a *Law of Grace*; which assures, That upon a *Return* to former *Obedience*, Sins shall be entirely pardon'd, and they have Access to *eternal Rewards*. I grant it highly probable, That if GOD had not intended *Grace* to some, such a *Dispensation* had never been. I admit, That this *Dispensation* is subservient to a *Design of Grace* upon some. I further allow, That there is no *absolute Impossibility* of the Salvation of Persons, however deeply guilty, who are not yet under the *Penalty*: But if they are sav'd, it must be by some Means or Way reveal'd by GOD, and superadded to all the Former, which I can never see to amount to any *Law of Grace*, since it is manifest, 1. That all this may be exercis'd towards them whom GOD in End designs everlastingly to punish. He exercises *much Long-suffering to the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction*. 2. There is Nothing in this whole Dispensation, that in the least intimates any Purpose of GOD to pass by former Offences, either *absolutely* or upon *Condition*. 3. In Fact it has never been found, That ever this *Dispensation* has led any one to that *sincere Repentance*, which must be allow'd necessary, in Order to Pardon. And I dare not say, That GOD ever did appoint Means for such an End, which after so long Trial should never answer it. 4. All whom GOD has pardon'd, or of whom we may say, That he has brought them to *Repentance*, have been brought by other Means. So that upon the Whole, I see no Ground for asserting an *universal Law of Grace*.

As what has been above said, takes off the principal Pretence for such an *universal Law of Grace*, which some seem so fond of; so if any such is asserted, it must be own'd to be a *Law* of a very *universal Tenor*,

as being that wherein all Mankind are concern'd. It must be allow'd a *Law* design'd to take off the Force of the *original Law*, concreated with our Nature, that necessarily results from the *Nature* of GOD and Man, and their *natural Relation*, at least, as to one Instance, I mean the *penal Sanction*, in Case of Sin. It must be allow'd a *Law* not *meerly directive* as to Duty, but design'd to tender *undeserved Favours* to sinful Man. Now he that can think a few, or call them many, dubious Actions, that is, Actions capable of another, yea, contrary Construction, a *sufficient Promulgation* of such a *Law*, as is of so universal Extent, as derogates, at least, in one Instance of so great Moment, from a *Law* so firmly and solemnly established, without any known Provision for its Honour, injur'd by so many Sins; and finally, that tenders such great Favours to the Transgressors of it, may believe what he pleases. I must own this one Consideration is with me enough to sink that Notion.

But now to conclude this whole Matter, upon which we have dwelt so long; upon the nicest Survey of all Occurrences in the *Heathen World*, I can discern Nothing that favours of any Acquaintance with that *Forgiveness* that is with GOD; unless it is that generally intertain'd Notion of the *Placability* of their Deities. This Notion, I make no Doubt, had its *Rise* from *Revelation*, and was continu'd by *Tradition*. And several Things did concur to the Preservation of this, while other *Notices* that had the same *Rise* were lost; the *apparent Necessity* of it to Man in his present sinful Condition; the *Suitableness* of it to lay a Foundation for that *Worship*, to which the remaining *natural Notices* of a Deity urg'd them, and which was of indispensable Necessity toward the Support of humane Government; the *Darkness* and *Blindness* of Men, as to the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin; the *Holiness* of GOD's Nature, and the strong Inclination all Men have to be favourable, even to their own Faults, did contribute not a little toward its Support. Finally, this *Placability* did not so much respect the *one true GOD*, of whom they had very little Knowledge, as their own *fictitious Deities*, which they put in the Room of the true GOD. And it's obvious, That when Men took upon them to set up *Gods*, they would be sure to frame such as might agree with their own Apprehensions, and pass by their Faults with as little Difficulty as they committed them. Whatever there is as to this, we have no Reason to think that this is a *natural Notice*, it being neither *self-evident*, nor certainly *deducible from Principles* that are such.

C H A P. XI.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion to eradicate our Inclinations to Sin, or subdue its Power.

I Think we have said enough to demonstrate the *Insufficiency of natural Religion*, to satisfy us as to the Way how we may obtain the *Removal of Guilt*, or the *Pardon of Sin*. Let us now see whether it is able to remove the *Corruption of Nature*, and subdue or eradicate our Inclinations to Sin.

Before we enter directly on this, it will not be impertinent, if it is not plainly necessary, that we say somewhat concerning the *Nature of this Corruption*. We shall therefore offer the few following Hints concerning it.

I. It is most certain, That Man has *corrupt Inclinations*. I think this will scarce be deny'd; since it's beyond Contradiction evident, That the Bulk of Mankind in all Ages, have run headlong into those Courses which *Reason* condemns as contrary to the *Law*, under which we are made. The *Law* condemns, *Reason* justifies the *Law*, and proclaims those Courses unworthy of us; *Conscience* checks and sometimes torments, and yet Sinners run on. Can all this be without *corrupt Inclinations* swaying, yea, as it were, forcibly driving that Way? No sure.

II. 'Tis certain, That not only there are *such Inclinations* in Man, but that they are hugely strong and forcible. Our own *Reason* condemns those Actions, and cry, *Shame* on the Sinner's *Conscience* pre-
sages the Resentments of the righteous GOD, the evil Effects of them are visible, and they are felt to be destructive to our Health, ruining to our Reputation and Estates, inconsistent with our inward Peace; yea, in not a few Instances, humane Law provides terrible Punishments: And yet, in spite of all those strong Mounds, we are carried down with the Stream: Nor can the most forcible rational Considerations, from *Interest*, *Honour* or *Prudence* stop our Career. Certainly the Force of Inclination, that carries over all those, must be great.

III. It

III. It seems plainly *natural* and *congenite* to us; I shall not nicely enquire in what Sense it is so. I am far from thinking, That our *Natures* as at first made, were created with it. I have said enough before to prove this impossible: But I mean, That as our *Natures now* are, however they came to be so, it is an inseparable Appendage of them, cleaves to them, and proceeds not meerly from *Custom*, and is not *acquir'd*, tho' it is oft improv'd by *Custom*. Now this seems evident from many Things, 1. The *Universality* of it. All Men, in all Ages, in all Places, and in all Circumstances, have such *vitious Inclinations*. I do not say that every Individual is *proud, ambitious, covetous, revengeful, passionate* and *lustful*. No, but every one has some one or other of these, or the like breaking out; which says, The *Spring* is within and is strong; tho' the Constitution of our Bodies, the *Climates* we live under, our Education and Way, Manner and Circumstances of Life, have dam'd in some of them, and cut out Channels for others of them. Now it's plainly unaccountable how all Men should be thus corrupt, if not naturally so. No parallel Instance, in any Sort, can be given, where any Thing not *natural* and *congenite*, at least as to its *Principle* and *Inclination*, has obtain'd such an *universal Sway*. 2. It waits not till we are grown and form'd by *Education, Custom, Engagement* and *Inventions*; but makes strong, discernible and sensible Eruptions in *Infancy* and *Child-hood*. As soon as we are capable, and very oft, while one would think us scarce so, by Reason of Age, we are *proud, revengeful, covetous, &c.* which says, This is *congenite*. 3. 'Tis oft seen, That *those Corruptions* break out in our young Years, which neither Education, Example, Circumstances, nor any Thing else, save a *corrupted Nature* can give any Encouragement to. 4. Yea more, how strong are these Inclinations, and that very early, which are discourag'd, oppos'd, born down, and have all outward Occasions cut off from them. One is *passionate* amongst calm People, tho' he is punish'd for it and sees it not. Another is *ambitious* and *proud* amongst sober People, in mean Circumstances, where there is no Example to excite Ambition, no Theater to act it upon, and the Beginnings are curb'd by Precept, Instruction, Reproof, Chastisements and Example. 5. Those Things are evidently interwoven with, and strength'n'd by the very *Constitutions* of our Body and *Climates*, under which we live. Hence there are *domestick* and *national Vices*, which cleave to some *Families* and *Nations*. 6. The best, the most sober, and freest from discernible Eruptions of *Corruption*, yet do own they find the Inclinations strong,

and driving them into indiscernible Acts correspondent to them. 7. They who deny the *Force* and *Being* of these Inclinations, and who pretend the *Will* of Man able to master all these, yet cannot but own, that there are *such Inclinations*; and as for the pretended *Ability* of the *Will* to conquer them, they give the least Proof of it, who pretend most to it: For if the *Will* is thus *able*, and if, as they pretend, they have sufficient moral Arguments which perswade to it, why is it not done? What stops it? 8. I shall only further offer the Testimonies of some few among the *Heathens*; *Timens* the *Locrian*, who liv'd before *Plato*, tells us in his Discourses, "That

Gales Court of the
Gentiles, Part 4. Lib.
1. Cap. 4. Par. 2.

"Vitiosity comes from our Parents and first Principles, rather than from *Negligence* and *Disorder of publick Manners*; because we never depart from those Actions, which lead us to imitate the primitive Sins of our Parents. *Plato* tells us, That, "In Times past, the divine Nature flourished in Men; but at length it mix'd with Mortal, and ἀνθρωπίνῳ, humane Custom prevail'd to the Ruin of Mankind: And from this Source, there follow'd and Inundation of Evils on Men. Hence he calls Corruption νόσος ἡ καὶ αὐτοῦ, the natural Disease, or Disease of Nature, because the Nature of Mankind is greatly degenerate and deprav'd, and all Manner of Disorders infest humane Nature: And Men being impotent, are torn in Pieces by their own Lusts, as by so many wild Horses. Hence *Democritus* is said to affirm, The Diseases of the Soul to be so great, that if it were opened, it would appear to be a Sepulchre of all manner of Evils.

Arist. Ethick, Lib.
1. Cap. 13.

"*Aristotle* tells us, That there is in us some- what naturally repugnant to right Reason, περὶ αὐτὸν τὸ πρὸς τὸν λόγον. *Seneca* Epist. 50. gives us a very remarkable Account of his Thoughts in this Matter. The whole were worthy to be transcrib'd, but it's too long. I shall translate a Part of it. "Why do we deceive our selves? Our Evil is not from without; it is fix'd in our very Bowels. *Alibi*, All Sins are in all Men, but all do not appear in each Man: He that hath one Sin hath all. We say, That all Men are intemperate, avaricious, luxurious, malignant; not that these Sins appear in all; but because they may be, yea, are in all, altho' latent. A Man may be nocent, tho' he do no Hurt. Sins are perfect, before they break forth into Effect. It is worthy of our Observation, what *Mr. Gale* tells us, after he has quoted these Words, That *Jansenius* breaks forth

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into a Rapture upon hearing these *Philosophers* philosophize more truly about the *Corruption of Man's Nature*, than *Pelagians* and others of late.

But the *Oracles of Reason* tell us, That it is deny'd, " *That the Lapse of Nature is universal, because some, through the Course of their Lives, have prov'd more inclinable or prone to Vertue than to Vice.* I have spoke to this before, but I add, 1. This is not enough, they are more prone to *Vertue* than *Vice*: For the Question is, Whether they have *Inclinations to Vice*, and not, Whether the *Contrary* are stronger? 2. This cannot be pretended to be the Case with many. Now, since the Question is about a *Religion sufficient* for all Mankind, if any of them have such a Distemper, and *natural Religion* provide no Cure, it is *insufficient*. 3. It is not, Whether there are Men that have been prone to *some Vertues*, and averse from *some Vices*, possibly scandalous Sins? But whether there have been Men inclin'd to *no Sin*, prone to *all Vertue*? If they assert such an one, shew us the Man. We cannot believe any such, since all we know are otherwise, till we see a Condescension. 4. It's not the Business whether Men have done *vertuous Acts ordinarily*, that is, The *material Acts of Vertue*: For *Corruption* may run freely out in this hidden Channel. A Man may, be ambitious, proud and live among Persons, with whom *Vice* is decry'd, open *Vice* I mean, and therefore affects a great Exactness as to *Morality*. This is good: But this is all but a Sacrifice to *Ambition*. One *Lust* is the *principal Idol*, all the rest are sacrific'd to it. *Corruption* turns not troublesome, and is pleas'd, if it get Vent any Way. A strong Spring, if it may get a Vent under Ground, may press a Vent above; yet it will easily be restrain'd there.

Now this being the Case plainly with Man, it is impossible for him to reach *Happiness*, while *this Corruption* remains; nor can he be sure of *Acceptance* with GOD. While Things are thus, *Nature* is imperfect, *Man* is out of Order, *Reason*, the nobler Part, is at under, and *Passions*, the brutal Part, bear the Sway. This is more unseemly, than to see *Servants on Horses*, while *Princes walk on Foot*. There is continual Occasion for Remorse, Checks, Challenges of Conscience, and Fears of the Resentment of a holy GOD. There can be no firm Confidence of Access to GOD, or near Fellowship with him, while we entertain *his Enemies* in our Bosom; nay, have them interwoven, as it were, with our *Natures*.

The *Deists*, I know, make a horrible Outcry against *Christians*, for asserting this *Corruption of Nature*. *Herbert*, in his Book *De Veritate*, has many bitter *Invectives* against the Asserters of it; and yet, overcome with Evidence of Truth, he is oblig'd frequently to acknowledge it plainly: Yea not only does he acknowledge it, but he pleads this directly, in Excuse of the most abominable Wickedness. After he has told us, That the Temperament or Constitution of our Bodies have a powerful Influence to sway us to some Sins, he subjoins, "*Quo Pacto haud ita levi Negotio damandas existimo, qui ex $\pi\rho\sigma\upsilon\chi\epsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$ aliqua pravaricantur. Quemadmodum igitur Flagitii haud juste argueris Lethargum Desidem, aut Hydropicum Bibacem; ita fortasse neque Veneris, aut Martis Oestro percitum modo in peccantium Humororum Redundantiam, potius quam pravum aliquem Habitum, Delictum commode rejici possit. Neque tamen me hic Conscelerati cujusvis Patronum fisto; sed in id solummodo contendo, ut mitiori Sententia de iis statuamus, qui corporea, brutali, & tantum non necessaria Propensione in Peccata prolabuntur.*" Well, here is a handsom Excuse for *Vice*. We must be as far from condemning him, who prompted by *Passion*, slays and murders, or hurried on by *Lust*, commits Rapes and Adulteries; as of censuring him, who is sick of a *Lethargy*, for his Laziness and Indisposition to act; or one that's *Hydropick*, for his immoderate Thirst. This Divinity will please profane Men to a Degree. The *Salvo* he subjoins is very frivolous, and deserves rather Contempt than an Answer. But to leave this, 'tis plain, That there are such *Inclinations*, and that if they are not rooted out, we are undone. What tho' Men might have *Hopes*, if they but err'd once, that they might easily obtain *Remission*; yet sure it must confound them, when they still sin on, and that out of Inclination. Unless therefore *natural Religion* is able to cure this *Disease*, and eradicate those *Inclinations*, it serves to no valuable Purpose, at least, it is *insufficient* as to the great Ends of Religion, our own *Happiness*, or *Acceptance* with GOD. And that really it cannot do so, will be clear by the following Considerations.

I. If this *Corruption* is *congenite* to our *Natures*, as the abovemention'd Arguments go near to demonstrate, and the *Christian Religion* fully proves, it is evident, That there must be some *Change* wrought upon our *Natures*. Now this is more than *natural Religion* can pretend to, which knows nothing of *Regeneration*, and the *sanctifying Work* of the Spirit of Grace. I know *Plato* and some others have talked of *Inspiration*, and some *Aids* of GOD: But this was all but Chat, Amusement

ment and a few tinkling Words, which might please the Ears; but what Evidence could they give, That any such Thing was attain'd, or attainable!

II. Tho' this were given up; yet of whatever Nature this *Corruption* and *Impotency* is, call it *natural* or *moral*, 'tis certain, That it is strong; *natural Religion* cannot give *sufficient Security* that it is practicable to eradicate it. We know that some Streams of *this Corruption* may be dam'd in, some of the top Branches lopt off, and some of the Fruits of it may be pluck'd. This, in so far as it is done, is good for Mankind, and useful in Society. Some of the *Philosophers* have gone a great Way in it, and thereby have sham'd most who are call'd *Christians*. But what is all this to the *eradicating of Corruption*, purifying the Minds of Men, and universal Conformity in Heart to *the Rule of Duty*? The Attainments of *Philosophers* need not here be talked of: Their Vertues were but *Shews* and the *Shadows* of them. Search to the Bottom, and you will find, That what they call'd *Self-denial*, was only a Piece of delicate Interest in Order to reach *Self-ends*: It was but a parting with one Thing pleasant to our selves, to gain a greater, which is *Selfishness* to the Height. As for that *Self-denial*, which *Christianity* teaches, it was not heard of, or known in the least. *Liberality* was but a meer Trade of *Pride*, which values no Gifts, provided it have the Glory of being liberal; *Modesty* was the Art of concealing our *Vanity*; *Civility*, but an affected Preference of other Men before our selves, to conceal how much we value our selves above all the World; *Bashfulness*, but an affected Silence in those Things, which Lusts make Men think of with Pleasure; *Benevolence* or the Desire of obliging other Men, but a secret Desire of obliging our selves, by getting them to befriend us at other Times; *Gratitude*, but an Impatience to acquit our selves of an Obligation with a Shamefacedness for having been too long beholding to others, for some Favour receiv'd. So that all these pretended Vertues, in general, have only been so many Guards made use of by *Self-love*, to prevent our Darling and secret Vices from appearing outwardly. All these are no Evidences, what may be done towards the Removal of *corrupt Inclinations*. Nor indeed can *Nature's Light* satisfy us that it is practicable. Can it shew us the Man that has done it? This were somewhat to the Purpose, could he be nam'd. But this cannot be. Will it tell us that we have a *Power* to do it? But this is somewhat that we see and find by *Experience*, the strongest and most convincing of all Arguments, not to be true.
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We find we may restrain or forbear *some outward Actions*, but we have no Experience of a *Power* to lay aside or divest our selves of *Inclinations* so deeply rooted. Besides, they, who talk of *this Power*, whereof others have no Experience, are liable to be question'd upon several Things which they cannot fairly or satisfyingly answer. Why don't they more than others who find it not, but complain of the Want of this Power? Why do not they show, That *those Inclinations* are *eradicated* which they own should be laid aside, which they assert they have a Power to lay aside, and which they say they have been long trying to overcome? The World will be forward to judge, at least, the thinking Part of Mankind will be so, That they are rather misled by some fond Speculations to judge they have a *Power* they really want, than that this *practical Proof* should fail, which seems scarce capable of an Answer.

Now will Men be effectually engag'd in a Work so difficult, which they are never like to bring to an Issue? Will they not rather choose to yield to the Conqueror than engage in a War that must last while they last, and that without Prospect of Conquest and being Masters at last? Yea, have they not done so? Who will be induc'd to such an Undertaking without Incouragement?

III. If this is practicable, yet it must be own'd extreamly difficult, and what Men will not easily be engag'd in. Inclinations are deeply rooted, strength'ned by Custom, and in most advantaged by Temptations, whereof the World is full. Now if *natural Religion* is suppos'd able to persuade to such an Undertaking, it must be well furnished with strong Motives and Inducements. Whence shall those be fetch'd? From the *Rewards* of *Vertue*, and the *Punishments* of *Vice* on the other Side Time? We heard how short the Accounts of *Nature's Light* of these are. The Impressions of these were always more deeply rooted in the *Vulgar*, than the *Philosophers*; yet they had no such Effect. It's plain, outward Incouragements do not attend the Practice of *Vertue*. There remains only then the *Beauty* of *Vertue* it self. Of this the *Philosophers* have talk'd wonderful Things. But the Mischief on't is, it was but *Talk* when they mis'd other Things, they could, ev'n with their dying Breath, as *Brutus* one of the *Adepti* is said to have done, call *Vertue* but an *empty Name*. They liv'd otherwise than they talk'd, the best of them not excepted. 'Tis excellently said by ingenious *Claudian*,

*Ipsa quidem Virtus Pretium sibi solaque late
 Fortuna secura nitet, nec Fascibus ullis
 Erigitur, Plausuve petit clarescere Vulgi.
 Nil opis externi cupiens, nil indigna Laudis,
 Divitiis animosa suis, immotaque cunctis
 Cassibus; ex alta Mortalia despicit Arce.*

De Consulatu
 Mallii Theodori
 ab Initio.

This is indeed very prettily said; but this is all. Men may please themselves with refin'd Speculations of the Excellency of *Vertue*: But it's not this alone that can sway corrupt Man. It is not the Question, *What Vertue really is*; but what Men *think of it*, and can be made to see in it. And it is certain, all the *Philosophers* could never perswade the World of it; and no Wonder; for they cou'd not perswade themselves. Mankind have had other Thoughts, and it must be other Views than Nature can give, that will beat them out of this. Another Poet plainly opens the Case,

Turpe quidem distu (sed si modo Vera fatemur)

Vulgi Amicitias Utilitate probat:

Ovid. de Ponto,

Cura quid expediat prior est, quam quid sit honestum, Lib. 2. Eleg. 3.

Et cum Fortuna statque caditque Fides.

Nec facile invenies multis in millibus unum,

Virtutem Pretium qui putat esse sui.

Ipse Decor Recti, Facti si Præmia desint,

Non movet, & gratis pœnitet esse probum.

Here is the true State of the Case. But come closely up the Point, this *Beauty of Vertue* is not discernible till we have made some Progress in it. While corrupt Inclinations are in their Vigor in the Heart, such a *Beauty* is not easily seen. 2. It's a *Beauty* too fine to be perceiv'd by vulgar Eyes, or indeed by any, without deeper and nicer Consideration, than most of Men can go to the Charge of. 3. *Alone* it's not sufficient to support and carry on in so hazardous an Undertaking. 4. This Advantage is not to be felt, till the *Vertue* be obtain'd. It's a Question whether it will be attain'd. So that it's plain, *natural Religion* wants Motives to engage effectually to this.

IV. 'Tis still further considerable to this Purpose, That these *vitious Inclinations* are strong, if not strongest in those, who have neither

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Capacity

Capacity to dive into those few refin'd Considerations, which inforce the Practice of *Vertue*, and the subduing of *Corruption*, nor indeed to understand them, when propos'd, nor have they Time or Leasure to attend to the Discourses of the *Philosophers*, when they are taught, or Money to purchase them. And *natural Religion* provides no Teachers, at least, if we take it according to the Accounts, we get from the *Deists*, who bear such a terrible Grudge to a *standing Ministry*, and have so oft in their Mouths that Reflection of *Dryden*, *Priests of all Religions are the same*. Now what a sad Case are poor Men in, who are solicited by outward Temptations and pushed on by strong Inclinations, and have so small Assistance given them by *natural Religion*.

V. As Motives are wanting, so the Work is not easily carry'd on, the Way of Management is difficult, and the Directions given us by the *Philosophers* or others, are exceedingly Unsatisfactory. Some of them are impossible, such as the entire laying aside our Affections; others of them ridiculous, such as that Direction above-mention'd out of *Plato*, for the Purification of our Souls by *Musick* and *Mathematicks*, &c. Others, and indeed most of them only tell us what we are to do, bid us do the Thing, but tell us not *how* to set about it; some of them only tell us how to conceal *inward Corruption*, or divert it. And, perhaps, I should not say amiss, if I should say, That what the best *moral Philosophers* either aim'd at or attain'd, was only to dam in *Corruption* on one Side, to let it run out at another; or to make that run in a secret Channel, which run open before. It were long to examine their several Directions. The learn'd *Herbert* gives us a Summary of them, which I shall here present the Reader with. 1. *We should suppress all our vicious Affections*. This is but to advise the Thing, without telling us *how* it is to be done. 2. *That we expiate our Sins by deep Repentance, and by the instituted Sacrifices or Rites*. This is only a Remedy for Guilt, and an ill one too, as has been clear'd above. 3. *That we avoid the Society of evil Men*. But then *we must* go out of the *World*, or at least, out of the *Heathen World*. 4. *That we use the Company of good Men*. But where shall we find them amongst those, who have no more but *natural Religion*? 5. *That we enquire carefully what is to be done, and what's not to be done*. But the Question is, when we know it, How shall we get the one avoided and the other followed, considering we have a strong Aversion to Good, and Inclination to Evil? 6. *That our Sins, which arise from humane Frailty, should*

be corrected or laid aside. But still the Question occurs, *How is this to be done?* 7. That we should use *Supplications and Prayers to the Gods, as the Priests prescribe.* But for what, and upon what Ground? And what will this help the Matter?

VI. To conclude this Argument, the *universal Experience* of Mankind bears Testimony to the Weakness of *natural Religion.* Nothing in this Matter was ever done, or done to Purpose, save where *Revelation* obtain'd. Should we narrowly scan the *Lives*, not of the *Vulgar*, but of the *Heathen Philosophers*, as *Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, Cato* and *Brutus*, we might easily pull off the Mask, and discover how little it was that they attain'd in this Matter, or rather, nothing at all. Yea even a *Socrates* himself would not be able to stand before an impartial Enquirer. I believe he could not give a good Account of his *Amours*, and those practical Instructions, which he is said to have given his Scholar *Alcibiades.* He repress'd well the *Vanity* and *Pride* of other *Philosophers*: But perhaps, nay I need not say perhaps, with greater *Pride*; yea even his *Death*, the most applauded Part of his whole Conduct, might be unmask'd, and depriv'd of the unjust Elogies, which some have made on it, who, it may be, never read the Accounts we have of it, or seriously considered his Carriage on that Occasion. 'Tis true he was unjustly put to Death, and behav'd very resolutely: But whether he fell not a Sacrifice to his own *Pride*, as much as to the *Malice* of his Enemies, may be question'd. This I say not to detract from those great Men, whom I admire, considering their State; but to let see, That they went not so high as some would have us believe.

In fine, Till *Reveal'd Religion* appear'd, nothing was seen in the World of true *Piety* or *Religion*, of *Mortification* of Sin, or *Holiness* of Life. The *natural Notices* could never make one pious, or indeed moral. Whereas *Christianity*, upon its first Appearance in a Moment, as it were, made Millions so. And they who have rejected it, and set up for *Heathenism* again, under the new, but injurious Name of *Deism*, are no Friends to *Holiness* of Life, *Piety* towards GOD, *Sobriety* in their own Way, nor *Righteousness* among Men. How mighty Saints do *Blount, Hobbs, Spinoza, Uriel, Accosta* and others make.

I design'd to have proceeded further, to demonstrate the *Insufficiency* of *natural Religion* to answer the *Ends* of *Religion*, by the Consideration of its *Insufficiency* to support under the *Troubles* of Life or amongst the *Terrors* of Death. But upon second Thoughts I judg'd, after what has

been said, it was not needful. Besides, if any look but at it, they may easily see it utterly *insufficient* to this Purpose, as it is indeed to the other great ends of *Religion*.

If the well founded Prospect of *future Rewards*, and a clear Knowledge of the *Nature and Excellency of Things eternal and not seen*, the present Intimations of divine Love, in cross Dispensations, the Supports of divine powerful Grace under them, the Usefulness of those Calamities, by Virtue of the divine Ordination and concurrent Influence of the divine Spirit, verify'd in the Experience of the Sufferers, are laid aside, as *natural Religion* does, which knows nothing of these, all that Men can say to comfort under Affliction, or arm against the Horrors of Death, is but an unprofitable Amusement, or, at least, like Rattles and other Toys we give to Children, that do not, in the least, ease them of the Pains they are under; but do, for a little, divert the Mind, while they are look'd at: But as soon as the first Impression is over, which those new Toys make on the Mind, the Sense of Pain recurs again, with that redoubled Force, which it always has, when it immediately succeeds either Ease or Want of Sense. And if it is really violent, these Things will not avail, no not to divert Trouble for a little. It's but a sorry Comfort to tell me, That others are troubled as well as I, or worse; That *Death*, which I fear, will end it; That I must bear it; That I have other Enjoyments, which yet present Pain will not allow me to relish. Yet such are the best Consolations *natural Religion* affords.

C H A P. XII.

Wherein the Proof of the Insufficiency of natural Religion is concluded from a general View of the Experience of the World.

AS a Conclusion to, and Illustration of what has hitherto been discours'd, for demonstrating the *Insufficiency of natural Religion*, I shall here offer a *six-fold* View of the *Experience of the World* in general, without descending to particular Instances, which have in Part been touch'd at, and offer'd before, and are every where to be met with.

I. Let us view *Man* as a *Creature* made for *this End*, to glorify *GOD* and enjoy him, abstracting from the Consideration of his *Corruption*, which the *Deists* sometimes deny, and sometimes, with difficulty, do but in Part admit. And let us consider him *as left* to pursue this *noble End*, in the Use of his rational Faculties, under the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*. If we consider him thus, and enquire into the *Experience of the World*, how far he has reach'd *this End*, we shall find such an Account, as will much confirm the Truth we have hitherto asserted, and weaken the Credit of the *Deists* their *imaginary Sufficiency of Nature's Light* to conduct Men to the *End* for which he was made.

If we look to the *Vulgar*, the Generality of Mankind, we shall find them in a Posture much like that wherein the *Prophet* saw the *Princes* in the *Vision*, with *their Backs* to the *chief End*, never once thinking for what they were made, pursuing other Things; every one, as Lust led him, following his own Humor, walking in a direct and open Contradiction to *that Law*, which was originally design'd for the Guide of our Life, and the Directory to *Bliss*, that Happiness, which all would have, tho' they know not where to find it.

If we look at the *Philosophers*, we may see them *sitting up late, rising early, eating the Bread of Carefulness*, wearying themselves in the Search

Search of *Happiness*, running into some Hundreds of different Notions about it; and yet not one of them hitting, or at least understanding the *true one*. And as little agreed about the Way to it. We may hear them talk of *Vertue*, but never levelling it as its proper End, *the Glory of GOD*. We may hear them urging its Practice, but not upon the proper Grounds. Rarely any Regard to the *Authority* of GOD, the only formal Ground of *Obedience*. Instead of plain Rules useful to Mankind, they obtrude cruptick and dark Sentences, rather design'd to make others admire them, than to be useful to any. They every where tack their own Fancies to the *divine Law*, a Weight sufficient to sink the other, as to its Truth, in the Apprehensions of Men, or at least, as to its Usefulness. They offer a *Rule* defective in most Things of Moment, corrupt in many, ruining in not a few Instances, destitute of any other Authority, than their own Say, or *ipse Dixit*, unintelligible to the Vulgar, and naked as to Inducements to obey it.

II. Let us consider *Man* as made for *this End*; but barr'd from its Attainment, by the Interposition of those great Hinderances and Rubs which now are certainly in its Way; I mean *Darkness*, *Guilt* and *Corruption*. There are *Stones* in the Way. How has *Nature's Light* acquit it self as to the *Rolling them away*? Truly they have been like *Sisyphus's Stone*, as fast as they have roll'd them up, as fast they have recoil'd and fallen back on them.

As to *that Darkness* that has overspread the Minds of Men; if we look at the *Vulgar*, we find them like Blind-men, content to jog on in the Dark, mir'd every where, stumbling frequently, and falling sometimes dangerously; yet satisfy'd with their Case, not looking after Light: Not so much because they want it not, as because they have no Notion of it, or its Usefulness; like Blind-Men that never saw the Sun, and therefore suffer the Loss of it with less Regret, than they who once saw, but now have lost their Eyes. They follow as they are led; are ready to take hold of any Hand, tho' of one as blind as themselves, and are never sensible of the Mistake, till sunk where they cannot get out again. The *Philosophers* indeed seem a little more sensible of their Case, and fancying Truth hid in *Democritus's Well*, dive for it, but lose their Breath before they come at it, and fall into dangerous Eddys or Whirlepoools, where they *lose themselves* instead of *finding Truth*; or trying to fetch it up, but with a Line too short, they fetch up *some Weeds* that are nourished by their Nearness to the Waters, and please themselves with those. After all their painful Endeavours,

we find them groping in the Dark, as to all useful and necessary Knowledge of GOD, or the Way of Worshipping him; of our selves, our Happiness, our Sins, the Way of obtaining Pardon, our Duty or our Corruption.

As to *Guilt*; if we look at the Case of Mankind, and his Endeavours for the Removal of it, we find the *Vulgar* drown'd in *endless Despair*, or *fatal Security*; like Men at their Wits End, trying all Ways that *Fear*, *Superstition*, or *rack'd Imagination* can supply, and still unsatisfy'd with their own Inventions; they are ready to try all Ways that self-designing Men, or even the Devil can suggest to them, sparing no Cost, no Travel, no Pain. They stand not to give *the Fruit of their Body for the Sin of their Soul*. The *Philosophers* either think through their Pride, they have *no Sin*; because they are not so bad, quite so bad as the *Vulgar*; or, if they still retain some *Sense of Sin*, they are driven into the utmost Perplexity, being convinc'd of the Wickedness of the Measures taken by the *Vulgar*, or at least, of their Usefulness and Impertinency, and yet unable to find out better; they try to divert their Thoughts from a Sore they know no Plaister for.

As to *Corruption*; we find all confessing it, crying out of the Disease; and indeed it's rather because it will not hide, the Sore runs, than because it's painful to many. The *Vulgar* despair of stemming the Tide, finding it easiest to swim with the Stream, are willingly carried headlong. The Body of *Philosophers* are indeed like weak Water-men on a strong Stream, they look one Way, but are carried another. Tho' they pretend they aim at ruining of *Vice*, yet really they do it no Hurt, save that they speak against it. A few of the best of them being ashamed to be found amongst the rest swimming, or rather carried down the Stream on the *Surface*, that is, in open *Vice*, have div'd to the Bottom; but really made as much Way under Water, as the other above.

III. Let us view Mankind under the *Goodness* and *Forbearance* of GOD, these Helps which some think *sufficient*. This Word is us'd, or rather abus'd as a *Blind* in a Matter of very great Importance; and Men who use it will scarce tell, if they can, ev'n in the Subject of the present Discourse, in what Sense they use it. But let it be as it will, some pretend the *Works of Providence*, particularly GOD's *Goodness* and *Forbearance* *sufficient*. Well, let us see the *Experience* of the World in this.

If we view Mankind under this Consideration, we may see them so far from being led to *Repentance*, that most Part never once took Notice of this Conduct of GOD. Others, and they not a few, have abus'd it to the worst Purposes. *Because Judgment against an evil Work* has not been *speedily execute*, therefore their *Hearts* were *wholly set in them to do evil*. The more Inquisitive have rais'd a Charge against GOD as encouraging Wickedness. And as for the Favours they enjoy'd themselves, they look'd on them, not as *Calls to Repentance*, but as *Rewards* for their *pretended Vertues*, and scanty ones too, below the Worth of them. Not a few of them have gone near to arraign GOD of *Injustice* for lesser Afflictions they were tristed with; while others have been entangled and tofs'd to and fro by cross Appearances. So that none have by this *Goodness of GOD* been led to *Repentance*.

IV. Let us view Men living in the Place where *Revelation* obtains, or where the *Christian Religion* is profess'd and taught, but renouncing and rejecting it, and in Profession owning only *natural Religion*: Such are the *Deists* among us. If we consider their Words, they talk indeed that *natural Religion* is *sufficient*; and to make it indeed appear so, some of them have adorn'd it with Jewels borrow'd from the Temple of GOD, ascribing to *Nature's Light Discoveries in Religion*, which originally were owing to *Revelation*, and were never dream'd of where it did not obtain; tho' being once discover'd, they have gain'd the Consent of *sober Reason*. But now we are not considering the *Speech*, but the *Power* of these Men; not what they *say* of the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion*, but what *real Experience* they have of it, and what *Evidence* they give of this in their *Practice*.

If we thus consider them, we find, That albeit when they have a Mind to impose their Notion of the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion* upon others, they pretend, That it is clear, as to a great many Points or Principles, that are confess'dly of the greatest Moment in *Religion*; yet while they begin to speak more plainly and freely their own inward Sentiments, they shew that they are not fix'd, no not about the very *Principles* themselves, even these of them which are of the greatest Consequence. Mr. Gildon, Publisher of the

Oracl. of Reason
Page 194.

Oracl. of Reason,
Pag. 212,— 228.

Oracles of Reason, is not far from asserting two *Anti-gods*, one *Good*, the other *Evil*; and so falls in with the *Persians*. Blount favours the Opinion of *Ocellus Lucanus*, about the *World's Eternity*, and consequently denies, or at least, hesitates about

about *Creation*. The *Immateriality* of the *Soul* seems to be flatly rejected by them all. Nor do they seem very firm about its *Immortality*. In short, after they have been at so much Pains to trim up *natural Religion*, and make it look *sufficient* like, they yet express a *Hesitancy* about its *Sufficiency* to *eternal Life*. We have heard *Herbert* to this Purpose already. *Blount* in a Letter to *Dr. Sydnham* prefix'd to the *Deists Reasons*, tells plainly, That 'tis not safe to trust *Deism* alone, without *Christianity* join'd to it. And the *Deists* Hope is summ'd up in *this*, in the 4th Chap. of the *Summary of the Deists Reasons*, That *there is more Probability of his Salvation, than of the credulous and ill-living Papist : and that is just none at all.*

Oracl. of Reason,
Pag. 154, 187, &c.
Ibid. P. 117, 127.

Oracl. of Reason,
Pag. 87, 91.

Nor does their Practice give one Jot of a better Proof of the *Sufficiency* of that *Religion* they profess: Yea, it affords convincing Evidence of its *Weakness*, *Uselessness* and *utter Insufficiency*. Their *Lives* shew they are not in earnest about any Thing in *Religion*. They are *Latitudinarians* in *Practice*. Their Words, their Actions, have no Savour of a *Regard* to a *Deity*; but they go on in all Manner of *Impieties* in *Practice*, and perhaps in *End*, put a Period to a wretched Life by their own Hands, as *Blount*, *Uriel*, *Accosta* and others have done, and the *Survivors* justify the Deed, upon trifling and childish Reasonings; as not knowing but they may one Day be put to use the same Shift. I am not in the least deterr'd from asserting this, by the Commendations that the Publisher of the *Oracles of Reason* gives to *Mr. Blount*, as a Person remarkable for *Vertue*. If a profane, jocular, and unbecoming Treatment of the gravest and most important Truths, that belong, even by his own Acknowledgment, to *natural Religion*; yea and are the principal Propes of it; and if gross and palpable *Disingenuity* be Instances of that *Vertue* he ascribes to him, and Evidences of those *just and adequate Notions of the Deity*, in which, he says, *Mr.*

Oracl. of Reason,
at the Beginning, Account of Blount's Life.

Blount was bred up, I cou'd give Instances enough from the Book itself of such *Vertues*: But I love not to rake in the *Ashes of the Dead*. Again, others of the *Deists*, having wearied themselves in Chase of a *Phantom* to no Purpose, and having neither the *Grace* nor *Ingenuity* to return to the *Religion* they abandon'd, either land in downright

Atheism in Principle and Practice, or they throw themselves into the Arms of the pretended infallible Guide; and thereby give Evidence how well founded the Jesuitical Maxim is, *Make a Man once an Atheist, he will soon turn Papist.*

V. Let us view Men living under the Gospel, imbracing it in Profession, but unacquaint with that Spirit that gives Life and Power to its Doctrines, Precepts, Promises, Threats and Ordinances. They, besides that they are possess'd of all the Advantages of Nature's Light, have moreover the superadded Advantages of Revelation, and its Institutions. They have Ministers and Parents instructing them, and Discipline to restrain them, they are train'd up in the Faith of future Rewards, and instructed in the Nature and Excellency of them for their Encouragement, they have Punishments propos'd to them to deter them from Sin, which they profess to believe; yet if we consider the Practice of the Generality of such Persons, it gives a sufficient Evidence, that all this is not enough. Who but a Man blind or foolish can then dote so far, as to pretend Nature's Light alone sufficient, when it is not so, even when helped by so many accessory Improvements.

VI. If we consider the Experience of them, who have receiv'd the Gospel in Truth, and felt its Power, we find they have indeed reach'd the Ends of Religion in Part, and have a fair Prospect as to further Success. Well, what is their Sense of the Sufficiency of Nature's Light? Why, if you observe them in their publick Devotions, you shall hear heavy Out-crys of their own Darknes, Weaknes and Wickednes; you may hear serious Prayers for divine Light, and Life to quicken them, strengthen and incline them to follow Duty, and support them in it, against the Power of Temptations, which they own themselves unable to master, without the powerful Aids of divine Grace. If you follow them into their Retirements, where the Matter is manag'd betwixt GOD and them alone, where they are under none of these Temptations, to maintain the Credit of any receiv'd Notions, and therefore must be presum'd to speak out the practical Sense of the State of their Case, without any Disguise; there you shall find Nothing but deep Confessions of Guilt, Darknes and Inability, with earnest Crys, Prayers and Tears, for Supplies of Grace: And what they attain in Matters of Religion, you shall find them freely owning, That it was not they, but the Grace of GOD in them that brought them to this. And the more any is concern'd about Religion, know and has attain'd in it, still you will find him the more sensible of this State of Things.

This

This is but a Hint of what might have been said: But I have rather chosen to offer a general Scheme of the Argument from *Experience*, which every one, from his own private Reading and Observation, may illustrate with Observations and particular Instances, than to insist upon it at large, which would have requir'd a Volume.

C H A P. XIII.

Wherein we make a Transition to the Deists Pleas for their Opinion, and take particularly Notice of the Articles to which they reduce their catholick Religion, give some Account of Baron Herbert, the first Inventaer of this catholick Religion, his Books, and particularly of that which is inscrib'd, De Religione Gentilium, as to the Matter and Scope of it, and the Importance of what is therein attempted to the Deists Cause.

WE have now propos'd and confirm'd our Opinion; our next Business is to enquire more particularly into that of the *Deists*, and consider what they offer for it.

The first Set of *Deists*, so far as I can learn, did satisfy themselves with the Rejection of all *supernatural Revelation*, and a general Pretence, That *natural Religion* was *sufficient*, without telling the World of what *Articles* it did consist, what belong'd thereto, or how far it went. The learn'd Lord *Herbert* was the First who did cultivate this Notion, and lick'd *Deism*, and brought it to something of a Form. This Honour he assumes to himself, glories in it, and we see no Ground to dispute this with him. I have met with Nothing in any of the *modern Deists* that makes toward this Subject, which is not ad-

vanc'd by him, and probably borrow'd from his Writings. It will not therefore be impertinent to give the Reader some Account of him.

This *Edward Herbert* was a Descendant from a younger Brother of the Family of *Pembroke*. He was Brother to the famous *George Herbert* the divine Poet. His Education was at *Oxford*, where he was for some Time a fellow Commoner in *University-college*

Geogra. Diction. there. After he left the University, he improv'd himself by Travels into forreign Nations, and obtain'd the Reputation of a Scholar, a Statesman and Souldier. He was made *Knight of the Bath* at the Coronation of *King James the I.* in *England*, who afterward sent him as Ambassador to *Lewis the XIII.* on Behalf of the *French*

See Herbert & Deism. *See also, Life of Protestants:* And upon his Return he was created *Baron of Castle-Island* in *Ireland*, and by *King Charles the I.* *Anno 1630*, he was created a *Baron of England*, by the Title of *Lord Herbert of Cherburry*, and died in 48.

This learn'd Person having once unhappily apostatiz'd from the Religion wherein he was bred, into *Deism* tho', as other *Deists* likewise do, he did still seem to own the *Church of England*; yet he set himself for the Maintenance of *Deism*, in his Writings. And to this Purpose he publish'd some Time after the 1640, (for I have not the first Edition of it) his Book *de Veritate*; and shortly after, another *de Causis Errorum*. These two Books are for most Part philosophical, and written with some Singularity of Notion. What is Truth in them is rather deliver'd in a new Way, than New; and by the Use of vulgar Words, in new and uncommon Acceptations, and his obscure Way of Management of his Notions, is scarce intelligible to any save metaphysical Readers, nor to such, without greater Application, than perhaps the Matter is worth. I should not think my self concern'd in either of these two Books, their Subject being philosophical, were it not that it is his avow'd Design in them, to lay a Foundation for his peculiar Notions in Religion.

There are two Things, at which *Herbert*, in these, and his other Writings, plainly drives; to overthrow *Revelation*, and to establish natural Religion in its Room. It is not my Design nor Province at present, to defend *Revelation* against the Efforts of this or any other Author, tho' I think it were a Business of no great Difficulty to remove what

what *Herbert* has said against it; yet since I have mention'd his Attempt upon it, I cannot pass it without some short, but just Remarks upon his unfair, if not disingenuous Way of treating *Revelation*.

1. On many Occasions, with what Candor and Ingenuity himself knew, he professeth a great Respect to *Revelation*, and particularly to the *Scriptures*, and pretends he designs Nothing in Prejudice of the *establish'd Religion*: But any one that peruses the Books will soon see, That this is only like *Joab's Kiss*, a *Blind* to make his Reader secure, and fear no Danger from the *Sword* he has under his Garment: For notwithstanding of this, he every where insinuates Prejudices against all *Revelation*, as *uncertain, unnecessary* and of *little or no Use* to any, save those to whom it was originally or rather immediately giv'n.

2. Upon all Occasions, and sometimes without any Occasion giv'n him from his Subject, he makes Sallies upon Truths of the greatest Importance in the *Christian Religion*; such as the Doctrines of the *Corruption of Nature*, *Satisfaction of Christ*, and the *Decrees of GOD*, &c. And having represented them disingenuously, or else ignorantly, which I less suspect in a Man of his Learning, not in that Way they are propos'd in Scripture, or taught by those who maintain them, but under the Disguise of gross Misrepresentations, mistaken Notions, and strain'd Consequences: And having thus put them in Beasts Skins, as the primitive Persecutors did the *Christians*, he sets his Dogs upon them to worry them; and this without any Regard had unto the Foundation they have in the *Scriptures*, or the Evidence of the Proofs that may be advanc'd for the *Scriptures* in general, or these Doctrines in particular, and without all Consideration of the Inconsistency of this Way of treating Truths plainly taught, and inculcate, as of the greatest Importance in the *Scriptures*, with that Respect, which upon other Occasions he pretends to that *divine Book*.

3. He states wrong Notions of the *Grounds* whereupon *Revelation* is receiv'd, and overthrows those imaginary Ones he has set up, as the Reasons of our Belief of the *Scriptures*, and then triumphs in his Success. How easy is it to set up a *Man of Straw* and beat him down with the Finger?

4. The *Deists* generally, and *Herbert* in particular, do grant, That the *Christian Revelation* has manifestly the Advantage of all other Pretenders to *Revelation*, as *Religio Laici*, P. 9, 10. in Respect of the *intrinsic Excellency* of the

Matter,

Matter, so likewise in Respect of the *Reasons* that may be pleaded for its Truth. And so certain is this and evident, that one of their

Number owns, That *Christianity* has *The fairest Letter to the Deists, Pretensions of any Religion now in the World*, and exhorts to make a diligent Enquiry into it; P. 139.

arguing, That if the Pretences of *Christianity* be well grounded, it cannot be a frivolous and indifferent Matter; and he grants further, That the Truth of the Matters of Fact which confirm it, is hardly possible to be deny'd. Now notwithstanding of this manifest and acknowledg'd Difference betwixt the *Scriptures* and other Pretenders to *Revelation*, when *Herbert* speaks of *Revelation*, he jumbles all Pretenders together without Distinction, and urges the Faults of the most ridiculous and obviously spurious Pretenders against *Revelation* in the General, as if every particular One, and especially *Christianity*, were chargeable with these Faults: Is this candid and fair Dealing, to bear the unwary Reader in Hand, that these palpable Evidences of Imposture are to be found in all Revelations alike, while, even, they themselves being Judges, the *Scriptures* are not concern'd in them? Yet this is the Way that *Christianity* is treated by this learn'd Author; and his Steps have been closely trac'd in this Piece of scandalous Disingenuity, for I can give it no milder Name, by *Blount* and the other Writers of the Party, as I could make appear by many Instances, if need requir'd.

5. Our Author makes high Pretences to Accuracy in Searching after Truth, and treats all other Authors with the greatest Scorn and Contempt imaginable, as short in that Point: Yet he seldom states a Question fairly, but huddles all up in the Dark, especially, when he speaks about *Revelation*, and heaps together Difficulties about all the Concernments of *Reveal'd Religion*, without any Regard to the distinct Heads to which they belong. This is a ready Way to shake his Reader about all Truths, but establish him in none.

Other Reflections I forbear, tho' he has given fair Occasion for many: But this is not my Subject. This Part

Baxter, More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it, in the Appendix.

of his Discourse has been animadverted on by a learn'd Author, tho' the Book is not come to my Hand.

The other Branch of our Author's Design, viz. His Attempt to establish the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, is that wherein I am directly concern'd. This he only proposes in his Book *de Veritate* at the Close, with a short Explication of his fam'd *five Articles*; of which more anon: And in a small Treatise entitul'd *Religio Laici*, subjoin'd to his Book *de Causis Errorum*, he further explains them. The Design of this last mention'd Treatise is to shew, That the *Vulgar* can never come to Certainty about the Truth of any particular Revelation, or the Preferableness of its Pretences unto others, and that therefore of Necessity they must sit down satisfy'd with the Religion he offers them, consisting of *five Articles*, agreed to, if we believe him, by all Religions.

This Religion, consisting of *five Articles*, which we shall exhibit immediately, he attempts to prove sufficient by some Arguments in that last mention'd Treatise. But the principal Proof, on which our Author lays the whole Stress of his Cause, is at large exhibited in another Treatise of our Author *de Religione Gentilium*, publish'd at Amsterdam, Anno 1663. by J. Vossius, Son to the great Ger. Joan. Vossius. His Pleadings in these and his other Writings we shall call to an Account by and by.

Herbert, in his Treatise *de Religione Gentilium*, pretends, Whatever Mistakes the *Gentile World* was under in Matters of Religion; yet there was as much agreed to by all Nations, as was necessary to their eternal Happiness. Particularly he tells us, That

they were agreed about *five Articles* of natural Religion, which he thinks are sufficient, viz. P. 186, 210, &c.
 1. That there is one supreme GOD. 2. That he is to be worshipped. 3. That Vertue is the principal Part of his Worship. 4. That we must repent of our Sins. 5. That there are Rewards and Punishments both in this Life and that which is to come.

Charles Blount, who set himself at the Head of the *Deists* some few Years ago, in a small Treatise entitul'd *Religio Laici*, printed 1683, which in Effect is only a Translation of Herbert's Book of the same Name, inverting a little the Order, but without the Addition of any one Thought of Moment; in this Treatise, I say,

he reckons up the *Articles* of natural Religion much after the same Manner. 1. That there is one only supreme GOD. 2. That he chiefly is to be worshipped. 3. That Vertue, Goodness and Piety, accompanied with Faith. *Relig. Laici, Pag. 49, 50.*

Faith in, and Love to GOD, are the best Ways of worshipping him.
 4. That we should repent of our Sins from the Bottom of our Hearts, and turn to the right Way. 5. That there is a Reward and Punishment after this Life.

Another in a Letter directed to Mr. Blount, subscribed A. W. has given us an Account of them somewhat different from both the former in seven Articles. 1. That there is One

Orac. of Reason. Infinite, Eternal GOD, Creator of all Things. Pag. 197. 2. That he governs the World by Providence.

3. That it's our Duty to worship and obey him as our Creator and Governour. 4. That our Worship consists in Prayer to him, and Praise of him. 5. That our Obedience consists in the Rules of right Reason, the Practice whereof is moral Vertue. 6. That we are to expect Rewards and Punishments hereafter according to our Actions in this Life; which includes the Soul's Immortality, and is prov'd by our admitting Providence. 7. That, when we err from the Rules of our Duty, we ought to repent and trust in GOD's Mercy for Pardon. To the same Purpose without any Alteration of Moment from what we have above quoted, Herbert reckons up and repeats the same Articles in his other Treatises.

These other Authors do but copy after Herbert. To him the Honour of this Invention belongs, and he values himself not a little upon it.

Let us hear himself. "Atque ita (sed non sine De Relig. Gent. "multipliciter accurataque Religionum tum Dis- P. 218. "sectione, tum Inspectione) quinque illos Articulos "sepius jam adductos deprehendi. Quibus etiam "inventis me felicitem Archimede quovis existimavi. He acquaints us, That he consulted Divines and Writers of all Parties, but in vain, for to find the universal Religion he sought after: It is not therefore likely, if any had moulded this universal Religion, or put it into a Form meet for the Deists Purpose before him, that it could have escap'd his Observation and Diligence.

Now we have had a sufficient View of the Articles, to which the Deists reduce their Religion. Let us next enquire after the Proof of this Religion; The Burden whereof must lean upon Herbert. The Deists since his Time have added nothing that has a Shew of Proof that I can yet see. Well, after he has in his other Treatises, as has been said, propos'd and explain'd his Religion, he at length comes to the

Proof

Proof of it in his *Treatise de Religione Gentilium*. Here the main Strength of his Cause lies, and with this we shall mainly deal; yet so as not to overlook any Thing that has a Shew of Proof elsewhere in his Writings.

In this *Treatise de Religione Gentilium* he makes it his Work to illustrate and prove, *That the above-mention'd five Articles were universally believ'd by People of all Religions*. This is the Proposition at which that whole Book aims. In the Management of this Subject our Author gives great Proof of Diligence, vast Reading, and much philosophical Learning. He gives large Accounts of the Idolatry of the Heathens and their Pleas for it, or rather of the Pleas, which our Author thought might be made for it; which has given Occasion to several Conjectures, as to our Author's Design in that Book, and his other Writings.

I find a learn'd Author, who has bestow'd a few short Animadversions on this Book, inclinable to think it not unlikely, That the Lord *de Origine Erroris*, *Herbert's* principal Design was, if not to justify, yet to excuse the Idolatry of the Church of Rome. P. 370.

And if one considers how many Pleas *Herbert* makes for the Gentiles Idolatry, and that they are generally such as may serve for the Romanists Purpose; and if it is further consider'd, that *Herbert* elsewhere seems, upon many Occasions, to found the whole Certainty of Revelation upon the Authority of the Church, and that alone, and the vast Power he gives to the Church as to the Appointment of Rites, yea and all the Ordinances of Worship; if it is further consider'd how concern'd some Persons were for an Accommodation with the Church of Rome at that Time, when our Author wrote, and how far *Herbert* was concern'd in that Party, who stick'd for this Reconciliation; if, I say, all these Things are laid together, this Conjecture will not appear destitute of Probability. I might add to this, That *Herbert* makes use of Pleas not much unlike those, which are us'd by the Church of Rome to shake Protestants out of their Faith, that they may at length fall in with the infallible Guide. In fine, I dare be bold to undertake the Maintenance of this, against any

[F]

Opposer

Opposer, That *Herbert's* Method follow'd out, will inevitably make the *Vulgar, Atheists*; whether he design'd by this to make them *Papists*, I know not, nor shall I judge. How far this Conjecture will hold, I leave to others to judge. I shall only add this one Thing more, That the seeming Opposition of *Herbert's* Design unto *Popish Principles*, and his Thrusts at the *Romish Clergy* will not be sufficient to clear him of all Suspicion, in this Matter, with those, who have seriously perus'd the Books written by *Papists* in Disguise, on Design to shake the *Faith* of the vulgar Sort of *Protestants*, in some of which, there is as great Appearance at first View of a design'd Overthrow of *Popery*, and as hard Things said against the *Romish Clergy*: Good Water-men can look one Way and row another. What there was of this, will one Day be manifest.

The *Deists* maintain, That *their Religion* consisting of the above-mention'd five Articles is sufficient. It is the avow'd Design of *Herbert* in this Book to assert this and prove it, and yet he spends it wholly in proving this Proposition, That these five Articles did universally obtain. Now it seems of Concernment to enquire, why *Herbert* should be at so much Pains to prove this. How does universal Reception of these Articles establish his Religion, and of what Consequence is it to the *Deists* Cause?

For clearing this, it must be observ'd, That it is a common Religion that *Herbert* is enquiring after, which may be equally useful to all Mankind; and nothing can agree to this, which is not commonly receiv'd. And *Herbert* has before laid down this for a Principle, That the only Way to distinguish common Notices from these which are not so, is universal Reception. This according to him is the only sure Criterion. "*Religio est Notitia communis* —

De Veritate, P: 55. "Videndum igitur est, quam in Religione
"ex Consensu universali sunt agnita: Universa
"conferantur: Quæ autem ab omnibus tanquam vera in Religione
"agnoscuntur, communes Notitiæ habendæ sunt. Sed dices esse
"Laboris improbi: At alia ad Veritates Notitiarum communium non
"supereft Via; quas tamen ita magni facimus, ut in illis solis Sapientiæ
"divinae universales Arcana deprehendi possint.

But to set this Matter in a full Light, I shall make appear, That a Failure in this Attempt, to prove that these were universally agreed to, is inevitably ruining to the *Deists* Cause and Plea for a *common Religion*; tho' the Proof of this Point will be very far from inferring That there is a *common Religion*, as shall be clear'd afterwards. And this will give further Light into the *Reasons* of *Herbert's* Undertaking.

To this Purpose then it's to be observ'd, That the *Deists* being agreed about the Rejection of the *Christian Religion*, and that *Revelation*, whereon it's founded; they are for ever barr'd from the Acceptance of any other *Revelation* as the Measure of *Religion* that the World knows: For they own no *Revelation* ever had so fair a Plea, and such probable Grounds to support its Pretensions, as the *Christian* has. However therefore the Generality of the *Deists* were satisfy'd to lay aside the *Christian Religion*, which will not allow them that Liberty in following the Courses they are resolv'd upon, without putting any Thing into its Place; yet the more sober Sort saw, That to reject *this Religion* and put none in its Place, would, by the World, be counted plain *Atheism*, which deservedly is odious in the World. Therefore they saw there was a Necessity of substituting one in its Place.

Now since *Revelation* was rejected, nothing remain'd, but to pretend, That *Reason* was able to supply the Defect and afford a *sufficient Religion*, a *Religion* that is able to answer all the Purposes for which others pretend *Reveal'd Religion* necessary.

When once they were come this Length, it was easy to see that it might be enquir'd, Whether this *rational Religion* lay within the Reach of every Man's *Reason*, or was only to be found out by *Persons of Learning*.

If it is pretended, That only *Persons of Learning, Application and uncommon Abilities* could attain the Discovery of *this Religion*, the Difficulties whereon the Pretenders are cast, are obvious.

What shall then become of their *Argument against Reveal'd Religion*, That it is not *universal*, That it is not received by all Mankind, That therefore it is not attended with sufficient Evidence. Upon this Supposition there is a fair Ground for retorting the Argument, with no less, if not more Force, against *natural Religion*.

Again, What shall become of that Plea, which they make for *natural Religion*, That GOD must provide all his Creatures in the Means necessary for attaining that Happiness they are capable of? May they not, on this Supposition, be urg'd, That, according to it, the *Vulgar* are not provided with such Means?

Nor will it avail to pretend, That those who are capable of this Discovery, are oblig'd to teach others the *Laws of Nature*. For, it may be enquir'd, Must the People take all on Trust from them, or see with their own Eyes? If they must take all on Trust, then is there not here a fair Occasion for charging *Priest-craft* upon them, who blame it so much in others? Will not this oblige our *Wits*, Men of Reason and Learning to turn *Creed and Systeme-makers*? Further, What will they say of their own Neglect, and the Neglect of the learn'd World in this Matter? How will they reconcile this to the Notion of GOD's Goodness, of which they talk so much, to suspend the Happiness of the greater Part of Mankind on their Care and Diligence, who quite neglect them, but keep up their Knowledge, and thereby expose the poor *Vulgar* to inevitable Ruin? Moreover, if they set up for Teachers, they must shew their *Credentials*. Finally, There is no Place, upon this Supposition, left for the strongest Plea for a *sufficient Religion*, that's common to Mankind, which are taken from the Nature of GOD and Man, and their *mutual Relation*; because all these Arguments conclude equally for all Mankind, and so are not adapted to assert some peculiar Prerogative in one above another. Nor are any able to justify a Claim to any further Ability this Way, than he can satisfy the World of, by the Effects of it. When a Man pretends to no other Abilities, than such as are due to humane Nature, that he is a Man is sufficient to justify his Claim; but if he pretend to some Eminency in natural or acquir'd Enduements above others, he must give such

Proofs

Proofs of it, as the Nature of the Thing requires; that is, he must make appear, That he has that *Ability* by Actings proportionable to the Nature and Degree of the Power he claims; and further than this is done, no wise Man will believe him. It will not help them out here, to say, That they only of better *Capacities*, and who have more *Leasure*, are able to discover this *natural Religion*; but the *Vulgar* are capable of judging and seeing with their own Eyes when it's propos'd: For, besides that all the former Difficulties, or most of them recur here, still it may be enquir'd, Is this made appear? The Difficulties on this Side are unsurmountable.

Wherefore, of Necessity, they are cast on this, to maintain, *That every Man is able to find out and discover what is sufficient for himself in Matters of Religion.* But now when this is asserted, if the *Experience* of the World lie against them, and it be found, as is commonly suppos'd, that many Nations; nay, the far greater Part of Mankind had no such *Religion*, this will much prejudice their Opinion, about every Man's having this *Ability* of finding out a *Religion*, or as much in *Religion* as was necessary to his own *Happiness*.

How will they persuade the World of such an *Ability*, if *Experience* cross; yea if it be not made appear to favour them? It is commonly thought, and we have made it appear, That the wisest Men, when they essay'd what Power they had of this Sort, foully blundered, and fell short of satisfying either themselves or others; and that the World generally acknowledg'd the Want of any *Experience* of this *Ability*, and therefore look'd after *Revelations* with that Greediness, that laid them open to be impos'd on, by every vain Pretender to *supernatural Revelation*.

Now if Things are allow'd to be thus; how shall they prove Man possess'd of this *Power*, if they are cut off from the Advantage of the usual Fountain of Conviction, in Matters of this Nature? What is the Way we come to know, That all Men have a *Power* of Understanding; or that such a *Power* is due to his Nature? Is it not hence, That wherever we meet with Men, we find them exerting the Acts of *Understanding*? And the like may be said of his other *Powers*.

Now

Now if it is once admitted, That there are single Persons, nay, whole Nations, yea more, many Nations that have no Experience of this *pretended Ability*, in Reference to Matters of Religion, how will they ever be able to perswade the World that all Men have it? More especially, if it be admitted, That the Learn'd themselves were here defective, as to that which Persons of the meanest Abilities and least Leisure are suppos'd able for: This will look very ill, if a Man who toils all his Days at the Plough and Harrow, could make this Discovery, how could a Man of Learning and Application find it hard!

In a Word, if Things are thus stated, as is generally suppos'd, has been already proven, and shall be further clear'd anon, then there is little left them to pretend for this *natural and universal Ability* of Mankind in Matters of Religion, if not, perhaps, to tell us a Story of GOD's being oblig'd, in Point of *Goodness*, to endue all Mankind with a Capacity, whereof there is no Evidence in *Experience*; yea, which the *Experience* of the World plainly declares them to want. But this will not easily take with Men of Sobriety and Sense: For it is not more evident, That *there is a GOD*, than, That *this GOD must do whatever is proper and suitable for him, to do*: And on the contrary, That *it was not necessary or proper for him to do any Thing that really he has not done*. If then, any shall pretend it becoming or necessary for GOD to do any Thing, which *Experience* shews he has not done, he will be so far from obtaining Credit with the World, that on the contrary, he will justly fall under the Suspicion of *Atheism*, and an *evil Design* against GOD. For to say, That GOD, in Point of *Goodness*, was oblig'd to do this, which *Experience* shews he has not done, is plainly to say, GOD acted not as became him. There was therefore a plain Necessity of undertaking to prove *Experience* on their Side, if *Deism* was to be supported.

If the common Apprehensions of Men, who enjoy the *Light of Christianity*, with Respect to the State of the *Heathen World*, are well grounded, all the Pretences of *Deists* as to the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion* are for ever ruin'd, and quite subverted.

It was but necessary therefore, That the learn'd *Herbert*, who undertook to maintain the Cause, should attempt to shew, That *Experience* was on their Side, and that in Fact a Religion in it self sufficient did universally obtain. And he had the more Reason to be concern'd in this Matter, because he avows it as his Opinion, That without a Supposition of such an *universal Religion* as the *Deists* do plead for, *Providence* cannot be maintain'd. "*Et quidem, says he, quum Media ad*

"*Victum Vestitumque heic accommodata suppedita-*

"*rit cunctis Natura sive Providentia Rerum com-*

"*munis, suspicari non potui, eundem Deum, sive*

"*ex Natura, sive ex Gratia in suppeditandis ad*

"*beatiorum hoc nostro Statum Mediis, ulli Hominum deesse posse, vel velle,*

"*adeo ut licet Mediis illis parum recte vel feliciter usi sint Gentiles, haud*

"*ita tamen per Deum Optimum Maximum steterit, quo minus salvi fierent.*

And as it is clear that this Author thinks, That *Providence* is not to be maintain'd without an *universal Religion*; so it is sufficiently evident, That this *universal Religion* is not to be maintain'd, if *Experience* lies against it.

De Relig. Gentil.

Cap. 1. Pag. 4.

Here then was a plain Necessity for undertaking this Argument, and proving, or at least, pretending to prove, That all *Mankind* had a sufficient Religion, or were able to know all that was necessary. For we see the whole Frame of *Deism* falls to the Ground, if this is overthrown. This therefore was an Undertaking worthy of our noble Author's great Parts, long Experience, great Charity to Mankind, and the great Concern he professes to find in himself for the Vindication of *Providence*.

And sure if such a Man, after so much Pains, has fail'd in the Proof of this Point, any that may succeed him, may justly despair of Success. He read all the *Heathen* Authors to find this *universal Religion*, and he was as willing and desirous to find it as any Man. And he has given in this learn'd Book Evidence enough of his Reading.

But since no Religion was to be admitted, save that whereon all Men were agreed, it was wisely done by our Author, that he reduc'd this *universal Creed* to a few Articles. For one who knew so much of the

the State of the World, could not but see, That they were not very many wherein they were agreed:

Well, he undertakes and goes through with the Work, and concludes with that memorable Triumph above-mention'd; "*Atque ita (sed non sine multiplici, accurataque Religionum tum Dissectione, tum Inspectione) quinque illos Articulos, sapius jam adductos deprehendi. Quibus etiam inventis me felicitem quovis Archimede existimaui.*"

But one might possibly ask, How it could cost our Author so much Labour and Pains to find out *this Religion*, and sever the *Articles* belonging to it from others, with which they were immix'd, when every illiterate Man must be suppos'd able to do this?

However, if our Author is not bely'd by common Fame, he repented, That he had spent his Time so ill in contributing so far to the Advancement of Irreligion, tho' others contradict this, and tell us, That dying he left this Advice to his Children; "They talk of *trusting* in Christ for *Salvation*; but I would have you to be vertuous, and *trust* to your *Vertue*, to make you happy."

Whatever there is as to this, I shall now proceed to examine our Author's Arguments.



CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Wherein it's enquir'd, whether Herbert has prov'd that his five Articles did universally obtain.

WE have heard our Author's *five Articles* above; he pretends to make it appear, That they were every where received: We shall now enquire, whether the Arguments adduced by him do evict this; and then in the next place, we shall see whether it is indeed true. And for Method's Sake, we shall speak of every *Article* apart, and dissect and inspect his Book, to find all that he offers, which has the least Appearance of Proof.

ARTICLE I.

There is One Supreme GOD.

THAT which our Author pretends to prove as to this *Article* is, That it was generally own'd by all Nations, That there is *One Supreme Being*, and that this *Supreme Being*, whom they own'd, was the very same whom we adore. We are not now to dispute, whether this *Article* may be known by the *Light of Nature*; nor whether some particular Persons went not a great Way in the Acknowledgment of it. This we have before granted: But the Question is, Whether all Nations agreed in this, *That there is one supreme GOD*, and he the *very Same* whom we adore? Let us hear our *de Relig. Gent.*
 " Author " *Quamvis enim de aliquibus alijs Dei, five P. 158.*
 " *Attributis, five Muneribus Disceptatio inter Veteres*
 " *esset, uti suo Loco monstrabimus; summum tamen aliquem extare,*
 " *& semper extitisse Deum, neque apud Sapientes, neque apud Insipien-*
 " *tes Dubium (puto) fuit.* And afterwards when he thinks the first Part of his *Article* sufficiently clear'd, he proceeds to the second part of it, *Reliquum est, ut Deum summum Gentilium, P. 166.*
eundem ac nostrum esse probemus. Thus we see what our

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the State of the World, could not but see, That they were not very many wherein they were agreed:

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CHAP. XIV.

Wherein it's enquir'd, whether Herbert has prov'd that his five Articles did universally obtain.

WE have heard our Author's *five Articles* above; he pretends to make it appear, That they were every where received: We shall now enquire, whether the Arguments adduced by him do evict this; and then in the next place, we shall see whether it is indeed true. And for Method's Sake, we shall speak of every *Article* apart, and dissect and inspect his Book, to find all that he offers, which has the least Appearance of Proof.

ARTICLE I.

There is One Supreme GOD.

THAT which our Author pretends to prove as to this *Article* is, That it was generally own'd by all Nations, That there is *One Supreme Being*, and that this *Supreme Being*, whom they own'd, was the very same whom we adore. We are not now to dispute, whether this *Article* may be known by the *Light of Nature*; nor whether some particular Persons went not a great Way in the Acknowledgment of it. This we have before granted: But the Question is, Whether all Nations agreed in this, *That there is one supreme GOD*, and he the *very Same* whom we adore? Let us hear our *de Relig. Gent.*
 " Author " *Quamvis enim de aliquibus alijs Dei, five P. 158.*
 " *Attributis, five Muneribus Disceptatio inter Veteres*
 " *esset, uti suo Loco monstrabimus; summum tamen aliquem extare,*
 " *& semper extitisse Deum, neque apud Sapientes, neque apud Insipien-*
 " *tes Dubium (puto) fuit.* And afterwards when he thinks the first Part of his *Article* sufficiently clear'd, he proceeds to the second part of it, *Reliquum est, ut Deum summum Gentilium, P. 166.*
cundum ac nostrum esse probemus. Thus we see what our

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Author pretends. Whether he has prov'd this, we are now to enquire. He has not digested his Arguments, nor cast them into any such Mould, as might make it obvious, wherein the Force of them lies, and therefore we must be at pains to scrape them together, whatever is any where, through his Book dropp'd that may contribute in the least toward the Strengthening of his Cause; and we shall not omit any Thing willingly, that has the least Appearance of Force.

The first Observation our Author insists on to this Purpose is, *That the Gentiles did not intend the same by the Name GOD, that we now do.* We by that Name design the *Supreme, Eternal, Independent Being*; whereas they intend no more than any *Virtue or Power* superiour to Man, on which Man did any Way depend. *Id omne Deum vocitarunt quod Vim aliquam eximeam in Inferiora, sed in Homines precipue ederet.* This he frequently inculcates, and tells us in the first Page of his Book, That the Observation of this, was that which inclin'd him to think, or presume the Gentiles not chargeable with that *Grass Poly-theism*, with which most do, and he himself had, upon an overly View of their *Religion*, well nigh once concluded them chargeable.

If the *Gentiles* meant the same by the Word *GOD*, which we do, no Doubt they stand chargeable with the most gross, unaccountable, absurd and ridiculous *Poly-theism* imaginable: For scarce is there any Thing

animate or inanimate, but by some or other became *Deify'd*.

Aurel. contr. Quicquid Humus, Pelagus, Cælum mirabile gignunt,

Sym. Lib. I. Id dixere Deos, Colles, Freta, Flumina, Flammæ.

But our Author is not willing to admit that they were so absurd, and to induce us to favourable Sentiments, he has bless'd us with this Observation, That when they called those Creatures *Animate* and *Inanimate Gods*, they meant no such Thing as we do by that Name. Well, if we should grant that the wiser Sort, at least, or perhaps even the Vulgar too, did *sometimes* so understand the Word, as he alledges; will that serve his Purpose, and satisfy him? Nay, by no Means, unless we grant him, That always they so understood the Word, save when they spoke of the *One true GOD*. But this is too much to be granted, unless he prove it, especially if we are able to evince, That not a few, both *Wise* and *Unwise*, believed that there were *more than One Eternal, Independent Being*: And possibly this may be made appear afterward. A learned Author in Reproach of the *Grecian and Roman Learning*, says, *That setting*



ring aside what they learn'd out of Egypt, they could never by themselves determine whether there were many Gods or but One. *Wolfeley's Scripture Belief P. 110.*

The next Thing our Author insists on to this Purpose, is, *That different Names do not always point out different Gods, but different Vertues of the same God* "Tot Dei Appellationes, quot Munera, adeoque; si triginta Millia Deum Nomina (quod ab OEnomao & Hesiodo in Θεογονία perhibetur, supponat quispiam, & tot ejus Munera dari, fatendum est, says Seneca, quoted by our Author. And consequentially to this, the same Seneca tells us, "Sapientes nequaquam Jovem eum intellexisse, qui in Capitolio aut alijs Templis Fulmine armatus cerneretur, sed potius Mentem Animumque existimasse omnium Custodem, Universiq; Administratorem, qui hanc Rerum Universalitatem condiderit, ac eandem Nutu suo gubernet, ac propterea divina quæq; Nomina ei convenire. Itaq; optimo Jure Fatum appellari posse, ut a quo Ordo, Seriesve Causarum inter se aptarum dependeat. Ita is Providentiam dicit, quum ipse provideat ut omnia perpetuo ac perenni quodam Cursu, ad Finem ad quem destinata sunt, currunt: Naturam quoque nuncupari, ex eo enim cuncta nascuntur, per eum quicquid vitæ est particeps, vivet: Mundi quin etiam Nomen illi congruere. Quicquod sub Aspectum cadit, ipse est, qui seipso nititur, & omnia Ambitu suo complectitur, universaque Numine suo complet. To the same Purpose speaks *Servius* of all the *Stoicks*, quoted likewise by our Author. The plain English of all is, he would bear us in Hand, that by those Testimonies he has prov'd, That the *Gentiles*, when they attributed the Name *GOD* to so many Things, intended no more, but to set out so many different Vertues, which all resided in the same *GOD*. *Seneca Lib. 5. Cap. 17. Herb. de Rel. Gent. P. 13. P. 47. De Rel. Gent. P. 37.*

As to this, we may grant, That our Author has indeed prov'd, That different Names do not always point out different Gods; for he has told us that each of their Gods had many different Names. But this will do him no Service, if we grant not, That different Names never point out different Gods. But how shall we do this, when our Author has shewed us, that many Nations Worshipped the *Sun, Moon, and Stars*; and thought 'em Gods, yea, distinct ones too, different in their *Natures* as well as Names. Each of them indeed had different Names, nay each of them had many Names, Titles or *Elogies* heap'd on them by their fond Worshippers, who, belike, fancied, that their Gods were smitten with that same Vani-

ty, wherewith they themselves were tainted, which yet as learn'd Rivet observes, had a dangerous Effect upon the Vulgar in Process of Time: For they were not so quick in their Observations as our Author. *Coacervatis enim Elogiis, Titulisque congestis, capi Numen putabant, maximeque inde affici Honore; ita ut tandem quæ diversa tantum Nomina Superstitionis fuerant, grassante Errore, diversa Numina haberentur.*

Further, we know full well that some of the more wise and learn'd Men, especially after the *Light* of the Gospel began to shine through the World, began to be asham'd of *their Religion*, and especially the Number of their *Gods*, and to use the same Shifts, to palliate the foolish and wild *Poly-theism*, which the Gospel so fully expos'd: and particularly *Seneca*, who was contemporary with *Paul*, and by some, upon what Ground I now enquire not, is said to have convers'd with him; and others of the *Stoicks* steer'd this Course to vindicate their *Religion* against the Assaults of the *Christians*. But it is as true, this was a foolish Attempt, and its Success I cannot better express, than in the Words of the learn'd and excellent Dr. Owen

Ubi supra P. 196. " Postquam autem severius paulo inter nonnullos
" Philosophari cœptum est, atque limatiores de

" Naturæ divinæ Opiniones inter plurimos obtinuerant, Sapientes pudere
" cœpit eorum Deorum, quos protulerant ferrea Secula, Ignorantiâ &
" Tenebris tota devoluta. Omnia ideo, quæ de Dijs fictitijs, Jove scilicet
" totoque sacro Helenismi Choragio, vulgo celebrata erant, Res naturales
" adumbrasse apud antiquos *Μυθολογας* contenderunt. Theologiam
" hanc *Μυθικην* vocant, quam nihil aliud fuisse aiunt, quam Naturæ

" Doctrinam allegoricam: And some Passages after,

Ibid P. 198. he shews the Vanity of this attempt " Postquam
" enim Evangelii Lumen usque adeo Radiis suis

" Terrarum Orbem perculisset, ut erubescenda veteris Superstitionis
" Infania apud ipsum Vulgus in Contemptum venerit, acutiores Sophistæ,
" quod dixi, quo Stultitiam istam Colore novo fucatam, amabilem redderent,
" Figmento huic (N. B.) cui adversatur omnis
" Historiæ Fides, pertinacissimè adhæserunt. Imo, ut obiter dicam,
" innovata est primis Ecclesiæ Temporibus apud ipsos Gentiles, tota

Philosophandi Ratio. Any one that would desire to see the Folly of this Observation expos'd, on which our Author lays so much Stress; may peruse that Chapter whence these Words are quoted. Nor is this

Owen ubi supra
Lib. 3. Cap. 6.

more

more than what Velleius speaks of Zeno a Stoick Cicero de Nat. Deor.
and others, "Cum Hesiodi Θεογονία interpretatur, Lib. 1.
" tollit omnino N. B. usitatas perceptasque
" Cognitiones Deorum, &c.

But were this true, which those Quotations pretend, it will not yet come up to our Author's Purpose, for these Quotations tell us not that all the World were of this Mind, but only the wise Men; and I fear that this too needs a Restriction. Now this comes not near to the Point. When our Author has Occasion to notice some absurd Practices or Opinions that cross him, he rejects them with this, "Quod a paucis solummodo superstitione factum, non satis in

" Religionem asseritur. Nos autem haud alia De Rel. Gent. P. 12.

" quam quæ omnes; vel plerique saltem coluere,

" sub Religionis Titulo ponimus. Now let this be, as it is, the State of the Question, and what some of the wiser did, is nothing at all to the Purpose; and this indeed is the Point. In fine, we doubt not before we have done, from our Author's own Book, to demonstrate that what he aims at in this Observation, and consequently all the Story of the *Mystick Theology* of the *Heathens*, is utterly inconsistent with all *Faith of History*, which makes us as sure of this, as they can of any Thing, that many Nations, nay most Nations, nay most wise Men held a *Plurality of Gods*, even in the Sense our Author would deny.

The next Observation he makes, is of Kin to the former. He following *Vossius*, as he tells us, divides all the *Gentiles Worship* into *Proper*, *Symbolical* De Rel. Gent. P. 183.

and *Mixt*. *Proper* is, when the *true God*, or the *Sun*, or the *Moon* is

worshipped as the *true God*, & the *Worship* is design'd ultimately to terminate in their *Honour*: *Symbolical* is, when the *true God* is worshipped in the *Sun*, as an *Image*, *Representation* or *Symbol* of him; then the *Worship* is not design'd only, nor mainly to terminate on the *Sun*, but on the *true God*.

As for the *Mixt*, we are not concern'd to speak of it. He would every where bear us in Hand, That all *their Worship* was *Symbolical*, and as such he frequently seems to justify, and avouch it as reasonable, which the *Papists* will readily thank him for; and he expressly asserts this, That all *their Worship*, save what was directly address'd to the *true God*, which I believe was very little, was *Symbolical*. Atque Cultum proprium

nullum fuisse olim preterquam summi Dei, videtur. It is well Ibid.

that he expresses this Position modestly, as being *confession* how great Ground others will see to judge otherwise, And the Reason

Reason that follows, drawn from the alledg'd Evidence of the Thing, we shall have under Consideration anon. But toward the

P. 226. Close of his Book, he calls them *Ignorants*, or *Scioli*, that believes not as he believes in this Matter.

But it would be expected, that when he advances such a bold Position, and is so hard on them that dissent from him, he would give good Proof of it; but if any expect that, he will find himself deceiv'd. I find indeed a Passage quoted with an high Commendation to this

P. 70. Purpose. "Atque hic de Cultu dei Symbolico preclarum
"Locum ex *Maximo Tyrio* Dissert. 38. quem adducit *Vossius*,

"supprimere non possum. Barbari omnes pariter Deum esse intelligunt; constituere interim sibi alia atque alia Signa: Ignem *Perseæ* Imaginem quæ unum duret Diem, verax quid & infatiabile, sic *Maximi* Verba vertit *Vossius*. But what is all this to the Purpose? Doth this Quotation from a *Platonick Philosopher*, who liv'd an Hundred and fifty Years after Christ, when the Gospel had overspread the whole World, and chas'd the *Pagan* Darkness away, and made 'em ashamed of their old Opinions, and improv'd Reason, prove any Thing? To spend Time on this, after what has been said above, were to trifle with a Witness. The *Deists* have not, nor can they ever prove the Truth of this bold Assertion; the Falshood of which we may detect before we have done. But hitherto our Author has only us'd his *Shield*; we must next see whether his *Sword* be not of better Metal. All that has been hitherto said, is only a *defensive* for the *Heathens Opinions* and *Practice*: We must now see by what Arguments he proves that this *first Article* did universally obtain.

His *first* Argument leans upon a few Quotations from some *Heathens*, who assert, That there is *one Supreme Being*, such as *Hierocles*, *Zoroaster*, and others, some of old and some of late.

But all this is nothing to the Purpose: For were there twenty times more, who said so, this will not prove the Point he is oblig'd to make good. He has undertaken to shew that it was not doubted among Wise or Unwise, That there was *one supreme God*, and he the same whom we adore. Now what is this to the Purpose, to bring a few learn'd Men, telling not what were the Opinions of the *Nations* or *Times* where they liv'd, or of the *World*, but what their own private Opinions were? 'Tis not the Question what *Seneca*, *Zoroaster*, *Plato* and twenty more thought, nay what *whole Nations* besides thought, but what the *whole World* thought in this Matter? This the Argument touches not.

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His next Argument is drawn from the *Confession of several Divines*. With this he begins his *Fifteenth Chapter*, and frequently speaks of it. But this says no more for him, than mo, and perhaps more considerable Testimonies, do against him. Besides, Since he has not condescended on the Persons who fall in with him here, nor their Words, we must leave 'em, and tell we are not concern'd in them, nor oblig'd to follow them further, than they do the Truth.

But that which he lays the most Stress on, is *the suppos'd Evidence of the Thing*. This he frequently insists on, as to *See P. 182, 166.* all his Articles, and its Force amounts to this. *It is so clear that there is one only Supreme Being, and that the Sun nor no other is he, that it could not escape the most dull and unthinking.*

But here our Author puts me in Mind of the Companions of *Christopher Columbus*, who first discovered *America*, about the Year 1592, They were one Day at Table with *Hornbeck de Conversione Indorum P. 7.* him, and began to depreciate and undervalue the Discovery he had made, telling him how easily others might have done it. Well, says he, I hold you a Wager, I do what none of you shall do, and presently calling for an Egg, says he, None of you can make that Egg stand straight on the Table; which when they had essay'd to no Purpose, he takes it, and crushes the End of it a little, and then it stood easily: which when they all said, It was easie to do: Well, says he, it is very true, ye can do it after I have done it. It is easie to see Things after they are discover'd to our Hand, which we would otherwise never have thought of. All the World was not so discerning as our Author was, and his Followers pretended to be, and he has given us sufficient Proof of that in his Book, and I truly wonder with what Face any Man could make use of this Argument after he had read, much more after he had write such a Book, wherein it is made clear as the Sun, that many Nations believed no other God but the *Sun, Moon and Stars*, as we shall shew afterwards. And I must take Freedom to say, That our noble and learn'd Author, with the rest of the *Deists*, and all the *Philosophers*, who liv'd since the Gospel obtain'd in the World, owe more to the *Christian Religion*, than they have the Ingenuity to own. What they think so clear, when *Revelation* has not only taught them the Truths, but the Grounds of them, was dark not only to the *Vulgar*, but the wisest of old. I cannot better conclude this, than by transcribing a Passage of the ingenious Mr. *Lock* his *Essay of humane Understanding*, "Had you or I, says he, speaking about *innate Ideas*, been
" born

“ born at the Bay of *Seldania*, possibly our Thoughts and Notions had
 “ not exceeded these brutish ones of the *Hoteutots* that inhabit there;
 “ and had the *Virginian King Apochancana* been educated in *England*,
 “ he had, perhaps, been as *knowing a Divine*, and as good a *Mathema-*
 “ *tician* as any in it. The Difference between him and a more improv’d
 “ *Englishman*, lying barely in this, that the Exercise of his Faculties was
 “ bounded within the Ways and Modes and Notions of his own Country,
 “ and was never directed to any other or farther Enquiries: And if he
 “ had not any Idea of a *God* as we have, it was only because he pursued
 “ not those Thoughts, that would certainly have led him to it. Thus
 far he. If some Men had been born where the *Gospel Light* has not come,
 they would have learn’d to talk more soberly of the *Sufficiency* of the
Light of Nature.

The only Thing that remains as to this *first Article* is, to prove, That
 this *One Supreme GOD*, whom he thinks he has prov’d, That the *Gentiles*
 all center’d in *was the same GOD with him, whom we Worship*; for this
 he refers us to three Scriptures. *Rom. 1. 19. Act. 10 throughout. And*
Act. 17. 28, &c.

Our Author has not drawn any Argument from those Passages, but
 barely refers to them. He was particularly unlucky in quoting the last
 of them: For it oblig’d him to take Notice of an Argument aris-
 ing obviously from the Passage against the Purpose, he adduc’d it for the
 Proof of; and indeed that Passage affords several Arguments against
 our Author’s Opinion in this Matter, which are not easy to be solv’d, if
 they who follow him, were to be determin’d by Scripture Arguments.
 But our noble Author has scarce fairly laid the *Objection*, which he
 started to himself from the *Altar to the Unknown God*. But to speak
 Home to the Purpose, there are only two Things that can be drawn
 from these Passages, or the like, (1) That some of the *Gentiles* knew the
True GOD. (2) That all of them had some Notions of Truth concerning
 GOD, or which were only rightly applicable to the *True GOD*. The
 Actings of Conscience within, and the Works of GOD without them,
 enforced on them the Impression of some *Power*, superiour to ’emselves,
 on which they depended; and this was indeed a Notion of Truth con-
 cerning GOD; for this was only justly applicable to the *True GOD*: But
 yet they, thro’ their Darkness and Wickedness, when they came to en-
 quire more particularly after the *True GOD*, applyed these Notions to
Creatures, and took them for this *True GOD*.

Now this is indeed all, besides bare and repeated Assertions, that I
 can

can find in our Author, to prove that his *first Article* obtain'd *universally*: And how far it is from Proving this, is evident from what has been said.

ARTICLE II.

This One Supreme GOD is to be Worshipped.

THE second Article our Author has not attempted a sufficient, nay nor any separate Proof of: Wherefore we go on to the next

ARTICLE III.

That Vertue and Piety are the principal Parts of the Worship of this One True GOD.

THIS he also pretends to have universally obtain'd, and that the *Gentiles* expected not *Heaven* for their *Worship*, or their *sacred Performances*, but for their *moral Worship*, that is their *Vertues*. To prove this, is the Design of our Author's 15th Chapter, at least till P. 195.

The first Thing he insists on to this Purpose is, The high Respect which the *Heathens* put on those Things, while they list'd, *Mens, Ratio, Pietas, Fides, Pudicitia, Spes, and Felicitas*, amongst the Number of their *Gods*, and erected *Temples* to them. This he proves at large. But what all this makes to his Purpose, I am not yet satisfi'd.

This indeed proves that they had a Respect to all those Things. Very true, so they had, and that because of their Usefulness in humane Society. Yea this proves that they had an undue Respect to them, so as to perform Acts of Worship to them. But that they design'd to worship God by those *Vertues*, which they would not allow they had from him, as we shall hear afterward, is not so easily proven. Besides, this was only at *Rome* that these *Altars* were erected, and so is far from concluding as to the rest of the World, where *Vertue, Hope, &c.* had no such *Temples*.

The next Thing our Author mentions for Proof of the *universal Reception* of this *Article*, is the *Custom of the Heathens in Deifying their Heroes on Account of their Vertues and Piety*. But our Author knew too

much of the *Gentiles Religion* to believe that this proves any more, than the fulsome Flattery of the blinded World that deify'd even *Devils*, and, as our Author elsewhere well observes, *Men* that were no better than *Devils*; or if there was any more in this Custom, when at first invented, it was only some ill apply'd Piece of Gratitude to Persons, who had been their Benefactors, or the Benefactors of Mankind. And all this Respect, that was put on 'em, was not because their *Vertues* reflected any Glory on God, but because they had been useful to Men. Besides, *Religion* was old in the World before this novel *Grecian Invention* took Place. As the *Roman Poet* and *Satyrift* observ'd,

----- nec Turba Deorum
Talis, ut est Hodie, contentaque Sydera paucis
Numinibus, miserum urgebant Atlanta minore
Pondere.

Nor did this universally obtain. So that the Argument concludes just nothing. It neither proves that all the World were agreed that *Vertue* and *Piety* are the principal Parts of the *Worship* of God, nor that on Account of these, Men get *eternal Happiness*. What their *Immortality* was, of which they talked, we may see under the *fifth Article*.

Some few Quotations from *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Plato* and one or two more compose our Author's last Argument. *Seneca* speaking somewhere of *Scipio Africanus* says, " Animam quidem ejus in Cælum, ex quo erat, redisse persuadeo, non quod magnos Exercitus duxit (hos enim Cambyfes furiosus, & Furore feliciter usus habuit) sed ob egregiam Modestitatem, Pietatemque. *Cicero Lib. de Offic.* Deos Placatos facit Pietas & Sanctitas. And elsewhere he says, Nec est ulla erga Deos Pietas, nisi honesta de Numine eorum ac Mente Opinio: Quum expeti nihil ab iis quod sit injustum, ac inhonestum
De Rel. Gent. P. 187. " arbitrere. Some others he adduces from *Plato* and others, wherein they say, That *Happiness* and *Likeness* to God are obtained by *Vertue*.

But to what Purpose are all these brought? (1) There is Word here of *Gods* and their *Worship* and *Piety* as respecting them; but not one Word of the *One true God*, of whom alone we speak. (2) It is certain that this *Piety* and *Sanctity* according to those Authors, comprehended the *Worship of their Gods*, as our Author expressly confesses,
Atque

“ Atque ad Pietatem consummatam plurima insuper (*that is besides Ver-*
 “ tue of which he speaks before) postulari aiebant, sed ea presertim quæ
 “ grati in Superos Animi Indicia essent, putà Sacri-
 “ ficia, Ritus & Ceremonias & hujusmodi alia ; *De Rel.Gent.P.185.*
 “ quorum Farrago ingens fuit: Cæterum sine præ-
 “ dictis Divis sive Deabus, Animam Regentibus, Additum in Cælum
 “ non dari. This last Part is only our Author's Say, and is not reconcile-
 able with what he tells us of their Deifying some,
 who were so far from being Gods, that they were, P. 195.
 says he, *Ne Viri quidem probi.* (3) As for what
 Cicero says, *That for Vertue and Piety we are advanc'd to Heaven;*
 I do not know well how to reconcile it with what he says elsewhere in
 his Book *de Amicitia, Vult plane Virtus Honorem ; nec Virtutis est ulla alia*
Merces, otherwise than by thinking that by *Heaven,* his *Cælum,* he meant
 that which many of them meant by their *Immortality,* that is an *immor-*
tal Fame, a good Reputation, after they are gone amongst the Survivors.
 As for *Seneca,* Christianity had taught him a little more, and his Testi-
 mony is not much to be regarded. (4) Were there Twenty mo of
 them, they never come near to a Proof of the Point : It is the Sentiments
 of the World that we are enquiring after, and not what were the
 Thoughts of some of the more improv'd Philosophers. The Question
 is not whether Men by the *Light of Nature* saw an *Excellency in Vertue,*
 and that it was to be follow'd ; but whether they look'd on it as a
Part, a principal Part of the Worship, not of their *Deities,* but of the *One true*
God ; and that for which *Heaven,* not that *imaginary Heaven,* which
 Men had at their Disposal ; but an *Eternity of Happiness in Communion with*
God is to be obtain'd ? Now our Author advances nothing to prove this
 Point.

ARTICLE IV.

We must repent when we do Amifs.

AS to this Article our Author Confesses several Things, which it
 will be meet to notice in the Entry. (1) He
 owns that the Ancients, the wiser Sort of them, P. 197.
 thought not *Repentance* a sufficient Attonement for the
 grosser Sort of Sins ; and quotes Cicero, saying, *Expi-*
atio Scelcrum in Homines nulla est. Where God was of- Cicero de Leg.Lib.
 1.

Natural Religion insufficient,

De Rel. Gent. P. fended they sought Sanctuary in *Repentance*, and thought it *Sufficient*, but not where Men were wrong'd. 198. "Cæterum licet in Remedium Peccati,

"ubi Dei summi Majestas læderetur, Pœnitenti-
"am sive Dolorem efficacem esse crederent: Non ita tamen ubi Ho-
"mines Injuriâ vel Contumeliâ afficerentur, de Pœnitentia illa statuebant

P. 195.

"Gentiles. (2) He confesses that they thought not *Repentance alone a sufficient Attonement*. He tells us that they had *Expiationes, Lustrationesque, sine quibus neque Crimine neque Pœnâ solutos semetipsos arbitrabantur*. Again, (3) He confesses that the Word *Repentance*, or *Penitence* was rarely us'd among the Ancients, in that Sense we use it.

P. 198.

"Nèque mihi Dubium quin eorum (scil. Peccato-
"rum) pœnituerit *Gentiles*, quæ tot Mala accerce-
"runt; licet rariùs quidem *Pœnitentia* Verbum inter Auctores, eo quo jam
"usurpatur Sensu reperiatur. Since then he makes all these Conces-
"sions, there remains no more save this, That he pretends all the "World
"were agreed upon *Repentance*, as that which was of Use to expiate, at
"least, some lesser Faults committed against God, and that we should,
"when we Sin, be grieved for it.

To prove this he quotes some Passages from *Ovid*, *Seneca* and some others. The only considerable Testimony is from *Periander*, who was one of the seven wise Men of *Greece*: One of whose Sentences, he says it was Ἀμαρτῶν Μεταβολὴν, *Te mali pœniteat, ubi peccaveris*. *Seneca* says, *Quem pœnitet peccasse pene est innocens*. & *Ovid*.

*Sape levant Pœnas, ereptaque Lumina reddunt
Quem benè Peccati Pœnituisse vides.*

But all these are alledg'd to no Purpose. They do not prove that *Repentance* was look'd on as an *Expiation* by the *Gentiles*. *Ovid* and *Seneca* liv'd too late in the World; and had too great Access to learn from others, to be much regarded in this Matter; but they only speak their own Mind, and we have here no Argument of the Agreement of the World as to any Thing about *Repentance*. The Opinions of the *Wise* are no just Measure of the Knowledge or Apprehensions of the *Vulgar*.

But that whereon our Author seems to lay more Stress, is their *Sacrifices*, which he pretends are an Evidence of their Grief for Sin or *Repentance*.

penitance. *Quorsum enim nisi interno Dolo perciti, tot Ritus Sacraque ad Deos placandos excogitassent?*

But 1. If the *Gentiles* had been as much agreed about *Repentance*, as our Author pretends, they would indeed have spar'd all this Pains and Cost. (2) They were indeed *griev'd*, but this *Grief* they did not willingly Entertain, nor allow themselves in as their *Duty*; but look'd on it as their *Torment*, and sought Sanctuary in Means proper for appeasing their Gods, as they thought. (3) This *Grief*, which *Sacrifices* prove them to have had, is no more, but that uneasy Sense of Sin in the Conscience, which is a Part of its Punishment, and no Duty performed for their Deliverance; and this forc'd them upon all Ways that they could imagine to get rid of it, so that *Sacrifices* were what they betook themselves to, to save themselves or procure a Deliverance from our Authors *Penitence*. (4) Further, our Author, when it is for his Purpose, can put another Construction on their *Sacrifices*; while as we have heard above, he makes 'em only absurd enough Testimonies of *Gratitude* to the Gods, and to have no Respect to Sin at all. It is indeed true, That sometimes they were in this Way us'd; so *Pythagoras* is said to have us'd them when he offered *Hecatombes* to the Gods, for a Proposition which he found out; but for ordinary they were design'd as Expiatory. (5) Do their *Sacrifices*, which they offer'd to so many Gods, prove that they were troubled for offending the One true GOD? I believe not. Ay, but this was what our Author should have prov'd. (6) Does our Author tell us that they were so little agreed about this *Purgative*, That no less a Person than *Plato* P. 196. to discarded *Repentance*, and put *Philosophy* in its Room, as that whereby only we could be purg'd. And this leads me to a (7) Thing that shews of how little Signification this pretended Proof is, That it is known that the more discerning *Philosophers* made most light of those *Sacrifices*, yea of Sin, and consequently of our Authors Catholick Remedy, *Repentance*. As to the *Sufficiency of Repentance*, for the Place he assigns it, we have spoken to it above. Our Author, I think, has badly proven that it universally obtained. And indeed had there been as much Weight laid on it, as is pretended, we could not have miss'd a more large Account of it in the *Writings* of the *Gentiles*. Further (8) Our Author pretends, that *Repentance* is of no Avail, as to the *grosser Evils*, but only washes away *lesser Sins*, & we fear our Author would find some Difficulty to prove that generally the *Gentiles* were so concern'd for lesser Sins, as he pretends. (9) Had this been so well agreed, as he pretends, about *Repentance*, & had this been the Design of their *Sacrifices*, I do not well understand why our Author should make such Opposition

position betwixt *Sacrifices* and *Repentance*, as elsewhere he does; when he is speaking of several Faults of the *Heathen Priests*, he subjoins

“ Sed & hoc Pejus, quod quum ex vera Virtute, vel hinc ubi
P. 10. “ exciderint ex Pœnitentia verâ, Pacem internam comparare
“ debuissent, ad Ritus & Sacra, quæ ipsi (Scil. Sacerdotes) Per-

“ agerent Res perducta est, &c. Here it would seem plain, That the People came at length, if not of their own Accord, yet by the Perswasion of *Priests* to overlook *Repentance*, and reject it, substituting other Things in its Room; and when once this obtain'd in one Generation, it's like it might spread and obtain in after Ages, being transmitted from Father to Son, and the *Priests* carrying on the Cheat; and so, at least, the World in all Ages, hath not made any Account of *Repentance*, as the only Expiation. Again, it would seem from our Author, That *Sacrifices* did not import, and were not Evidences of *Repentance*; but on the Contrary, Means invented to make People neglect it.

P. 197. I do not well understand how they, who if we may believe our Author, were all so fully agreed about *Repentance*, and were so prone and inclin'd to it, That their Minds run into it without any Perswasion, should need so much the Priest's Perswasion and be easily drawn off from that which they accounted so available. Let us hear our Author, speaking of Man's Recovery from
“ Sin, says he, Atque Instaurationem hanc fieri debere ex pœnitentia,
“ docuere tum Philosophi, tum Sacerdotes, ita ut hanc agendam Animam-
“ que purificandam, sed non sine eorum Ministerio, sæpius inculcarent.
“ Bene quidem si Pœnitentiam satis Populo persuasissent, quod neutiquam
“ tamen ab illis factum fuit; licet adeo pronâ in eum sit Anima Humana,
“ ut etiam nullo Suadente, in Foro Interno ex Gratia Divina, Conscien-
“ tiæque Dictamine decernatur. Our Author tells us, That the Peoples *Sacrifices* were an Argument of their *Repentance*, as we heard above, and that the *Priests* perswaded 'em to it, and that they were all agreed, That *Repentance* was the only *Attonement*, & that the Mind of Man needs no Admonisher to perswade it to *Repentance*; and yet he tells us likewise in the Passages adduced, That *Repentance* was quite laid by, *Sacrifices* and *Rites* put in its Place, the People so ignorant of the Worth of it, as to let it go, and so backward as not to look after it, unless the *Priests* had press'd it more (and yet we are told they inculcate it oft) and in fine, the *Priests* so negligent, that they quite neglected their Duty. How to knit all this together I know not. I do think it were easier to make these Words overthrow our Author's Argument, than to reconcile 'em with them-

themselves, with Truth, Reason or Experience ; but I spare Reflections that offer 'emfelves. Before our Author or the *Deists* make any Thing of this Argument, they must prove, That *Sacrifices universally obtain'd*, That *Sacrifices were every where offer'd to the One True G O D*, That *those Sacrifices were symbolical, of Repentance* as another *Deist* has it, and several other Things taken notice of above.

ARTICLE V.

That there are Rewards and Punishments after this Life.

WE are now come to our Author's last *Article*. He is not very constant in expressing himself about this *Article*, and how far it was agreed to. Sometimes he pretends, That *these Rewards were Eternal Happiness*, and that this was agreed ; sometimes only it was agreed, That there were *Rewards and Punishments* after this Life ; and sometimes he words it yet more modestly, That they *expected Rewards and Punishments*, either in *this Life* or *after it*. So *P. 203*, when he *P. 171.* enters expressly to treat of this *Article*, *Et quidem Premium Bonis & Supplicium Malis, N. B. vel in hac Vita, vel post hanc Vitam dari, statuant Gentiles.*

And indeed when he comes to tell us, how far is determinable in this Matter by the *Light of Nature*, he makes this *Article* of very little Signification. 'Non imperitè quidem, Bonos Bona, Malos Mala, vel in *Aeternum* manere affirmabant Veteres. At quis Locum Præ- *P. 210.* mii, vel Pœnæ ostenderit? Quis Supplicii Genus conjectaverit? (And the same is perfectly the Case as to *Rewards*, tho' our Author waves that, for what Cause it is not hard to conjecture) *Quis tandem Durationis Terminum posuerit?*

All that he pretends to have been receiv'd, was barely this, *That there are Rewards and Punishments after this Life*. Let us hear himself, "Et quidem præter solennem illam Notitiam communem, nempe Deum Bonum Justumq; esse, adeoq; Præmium vel Pœnam tum in hac Vita, tum post hanc Vitam, pro Actionibus, imo & Cogitationibus suis unicuique remetiri, nihil quod Verisimile magis esset ab illis statui posse decernimus. But he tells us, That by the Additions they made to this, and proceeding to determine further than they knew, even this came to be call'd in Question ; (which, by the Way, ruins our Author's Cause as to this *Article*) but let himself speak, *Dum hæc Philosophi, illa Sacerdotes, alii demum Poeta adjicerent, tota inclinata in Casumq; prona nutavit* *P. 210.* *Veritatis*

Veritatis Fabrica. Si semet satis coercuissent Gentilium Coriphæi, Neminem, puto, Dissidentem habuissent.

He asserts very little, we see, to have *unniversally* obtain'd as to this *Article*, and he seems to do some more than insinuate, that even, as to *this little*, at least, in Process of Time there were some, and even not a few Dissenters: For I know not what Meaning else to put upon the *whole Fabrick of Truth nodding, and inclining to fall*: And this is to quit the Cause. We shall however notice his Arguments, but the more shortly, because of what has been already observ'd.

P. 211. *First* then, He pretends, That the *Perswasion* of this is *innate*, That the Reasons of it are so obvious, and the Arguments leading to it are so evident, that they could not but agree as to this.

But I have already shown, That every Thing that is evident, or was so to our Author and his Companions and Followers, was not so to the ancient *Sages*. I guess that he learn'd most of these Arguments he insists on from some others than the *Heathen Philosophers*, or if they Manag'd 'em so well, he would have done right to have pointed us to the Places where they have done so. But when he has done, this will not prove an *universal Consent*: For we are concern'd in some others besides *Philosophers*. As for what he pretends of this *Perswasion's* being *innate*, I think he has said much to disprove it himself: Or if it be, I think the *Pre-sages of future Misery* in the Mind of Man, have been much more strong than of *Happiness*. And in a Word, he only says it was *innate*, but does not prove it. Yea, if this did not *universally* obtain, according to our Author's own Doctrine, it was not *innate*.

Next he insists on the Custom of *Deifying Heroes*, and placing them among the Number of the *Immortal Gods*. This he hints at frequently. But this did not *universally* obtain as to Time or Place, and so hit not the Point in the least. All were not *so dignify'd*, nay, not all that were *good*; nor does it prove, That even all that People, among whom this Custom prevail'd, were of that Opinion; but only the Persons principally concern'd. And indeed it were easy to shew that they were not all of this Opinion, which may possibly be made appear in the next Chapter.

His next Argument is deduc'd from a few Testimonies of *Poets* and *Philosophers* asserting a *future State*, which he has scatter'd up and down, here and there. But what is this to all the World? Do the *Poets Fancies of Elysian Fields, Stryx* and the like, give us the true Measure of the Sentiments of the World?

Thus

Thus I have view'd our Author's Proofs of his *five Articles*, and their Reception in the World. I have not knowingly omitted any Thing of Moment, advanc'd by him for his Opinion. I shall conclude this Chapter with a few general Reflections on our Author's Conduct in this Affair.

I do not a little suspect a Writer of Controversy, when he huddles up, and endeavours to conceal the State of the Question, and shifts it upon Occasion. It is always a Sign either that his Judgement is naught, or that his Designs are not fair and good. I don't believe that our noble Author's Abilities requir'd any such mean Shifts, if the Badness of the Cause he unhappily undertook, had not oblig'd him: But that this is the Course he steers, is evident. Now he seems to undertake to shew us, what the most *universal Apprehensions* of Men were in Matters of *Religion*; and anon, he pretends to tell us what the more discerning Persons, among the *Heathens* thought; and thus shifts the Scene, as it is for his Purpose.

It is further remarkable, That our Author has cramm'd in a great Deal of philosophical Learning, which makes nothing at all to the main Purpose of the Book. He has write a Book of 230 Pages to prove that these *five Articles* obtain'd: Whereas all the Arguments he adduces, scarce take up ten of them. The rest is a Collection of historical and philological Learning about the *Heathen Gods and Worship*. He only drops here and there the Shadow of an Argument; and then when we are some Pages by it, he tells us he has demonstrate this already, and we are referr'd back to some of the preceeding Arguments; and that is, we are bid *search a Needle amongst a Heap of Hay*. This looks exceeding suspicious like.

Read the Conclusion of our Author's 8. Cap. P. 54. and compare it with the Cap.

Again, I do not like frequent and repeated Assertions in a Disputant without Arguments. Fewer Assertions and mo Arguments, if the Cause had permitted, would have done better. It is said, That some by telling a Ly oft over, come at length to believe it to be true. I am apt to think that the oft asserting over and over again what he undertakes to prove, might go further toward his own Conviction, than all the Arguments that he has advanc'd.

Our Author undertakes to give us an Account what the *Heathens* Thoughts as to *those Articles* were, and what led 'em to these Apprehensions; but after all you shall find nothing, but an Account of some of their *Practices* with our Author's Glosses put on them, and the Reason that, not they, but he thinks may be alledg'd in Justification of their *Practices* and *Opinions*. If he had dealt fairly, he would have told us

in their own Words, what their Sentiments were, and likewise what were their Inducements that led them into those Opinions ; but to obtrude, as every where he doth, his Conjectures and strained Interpretations, as their Meaning, is perfectly intolerable.

'Tis indeed true, That our Author affords us several Quotations from the *Heathens* ; but, doth he, by this Means, give us a fair Representation of the Point in Controversy, and their Sentiments about it ? No. If his Reader is so simple as to take this for granted, he deceives himself. I know it is the Custom of some others, as well as our Author, tho' perhaps on better Designs, to quot some Passages from *Heathen* Authors, in Order to shew their Agreement with *Christianity*, and shew what a Length the *meer Light of Nature* brought 'em ; but hereby they do deceive the Reader : So *Cicero*, his Testimonie to the *Immortality of the Soul*, is alledg'd by our Author, P. 192, " *Quemadmodum igitur haut alius Deus, haut*
 " *alia Virtus, ab Gentilibus, quam ab Nostreis, olim celebratur, ita certè*
 " *communis utriusque Spes Immortalitatis fuit. Disertim Cicero 2 de. Leg.*
 " *ait, Animi Hominum sunt immortales : Sed fortium Bonorum Divini*
 " *& alibi in Lib. de Senectute ait : Non est lugenda Mors, quum Immor-*
 " *talitas consequitur.* Now if any Body should think that this Testimonie of *Cicero* gives a full Account of his Apprehensions about *Immortality*, they would be very far deceiv'd : For in his first Book of *Tusculany Questions*, were he discusses this Point *ex professo*, he discovers indeed an Inclination to believe it, & a Desire that it may be true ; yet such a Hesitation about it, that he knows not how to perswade himself of it, as we shall shew perhaps in the next Chapter. In like Manner *Plato* is cited by him, and many others to the same Purpose : But what a sad Uncertainty both *Socrates* and *Plato* were in about this Point, I shall fully demonstrate in the next Chapter. I shall here set down only one notable Instance of the Unfairness of this Way of Procedure. Our Author quotes *Solon's* Testimonie for *future Felicity*, P. 194. Let us hear our Author's own Words, " *Pulchram Distinctionem inter Felicem sive Fortunatum & Beatum*
 " *affert ex Solone Herodotus Lib 1. Ubi Cræso respondens, ait Neminem dig-*
 " *num esse qui vocetur Beatus antequam τελευτήσῃ τον βιον ευ; hoc est, Vitam*
 " *suam bene clauserit ; adeoque εντοχῃ sive Fortunatum hac in Vita, ne-*
 " *quaquam Ὀλβιον sive Beatum ante Obitum ejus Hominum appellari posse.*
 " *Huic concinit Ovidius.*

Disiq; beatus

Ante Obitum Nemo, supremaque Funera Debet.

Proprie

Proprie quippe loquendo, Nemo beatus ante Mortem: Ita ut beati inter Gentiles vocarentur, qui in Elysiis Campis sempiterno Avo fruarentur.

Now here we have a Proof to the full, of our Author's Conduct in his Quotations, and the Improvement of them. Was not *Solon* clear that there was a *State of Happiness* after this Life? Who can doubt it, after our Author has thus prov'd it? But what if *Solon* for all this, confin'd *Happiness* to *this Life*, defining the happy Man, *One who is competently furnished with outward Things, acts honestly, and lives temperately*; which Definition no less a Person than *Aristotle* approves. And in all *Solon's* Speech to *Cresus*, there is not one Word, if it were not disingenuously or ignorantly quoted, that gives us the least Ground to believe that *Solon* once so much as dream'd of *Happiness* after this Life. *Stanley* in his *Life of Solon* recites from *Herodotus*, this whole Speech, and the Story *Ibid. P. 28*, to which it relates, *Cresus* King of *Lydia* in *Asia* the 29. less, sends for *Solon* upon the Fame of his *Wisdom*: *Solon* comes: The vain King dazzled with the Lustre of his Greatness, asked the wife *Solon*, Whether ever he saw any Man happier than himself, who was possess'd of so great Riches & Power? *Solon* nam'd severals, particularly *Tellus* the *Athenian* Citizen, *Cleobis* and *Bito*, two Brothers, the Story of whom he relates to *Cresus*, and gives the Reasons why he look'd on them as happy, without ever a Hint of their Enjoying any *Happiness* after this Life. At which *Cresus* was angry, thinking himself undervalu'd whereupon *Solon* thus addresses him, "Do you enquire, *Cresus*, concerning humane Affairs of me, who know, That *Divine Providence* is severe, and full of Alteration? In Process of Time, we see many Things we would not; we suffer many Things we would not; let us propose Seventy Years, as the Term of Man's Life, which Years consist of 25200 Days, besides the additional Month, if we make one Year longer than another by that Month, to make the Time accord, the additional Months belonging to those Years, will be Thirty five, and the Days 1050, whereof one is not in all Things like another: So that every Man, O *Cresus*, is miserable! You appear to me very rich, and are King over many; but the Question you demand, I cannot resolve, until I heard you have ended your Days happily; he that hath much Wealth is not happier than he, who gets his Living from Day to Day, unless Fortune continuing all those Good Things to him, grant that he die well. There are many Men very Rich, yet unfortunate, many of moderate Estates, fortunate; of whom he who abounds in Wealth, and is not happy,

" happy, exceeds the Fortunate only in two Things; the other, him, in many;
 " the Rich is more able to satisfy his Desires and to overcome great In-
 " juries; yet the Fortunate excels him, he cannot indeed inflict Hurt on
 " others, & satisfy his own Desires; his good Fortune debars him of those.
 " But he is free from Evils, healthful, happy in his Children, & beautiful;
 " if to this, a Man dies well, that is, he whom you seek, who deserves to
 " be called *Happy*; before Death he cannot be stil'd *Happy*, but *Fortunate*;
 " yet for one Man to obtain all this is impossible, as one Country cannot
 " furnish it self with all Things: Some it hath, others it wants; that,
 " which hath most, is best, so in Men, not one is perfect; what one hath,
 " the other wants: He who hath constantly most, and, at last, quietly
 " departs this Life, in my Opinion, O King, deserves to bear that Name.
 " In every Thing we must have Regard to the *End*, whether it tends,
 " for many to whom God dispenseth all good Fortunes, he at last utter-
 " ly subverts. Thus we see the whole Passage, in which it is evident
 that *Solon* meant only, That to make a Man *happy*, it is requisite, he continue
 in the enjoyment of a competency till Death, and that then he die well,
 that is quietly, & in good Respect or Credit with Men. That this is the
 Meaning of *dying well* according to *Solon*, is not only evident from the Strain
 of the Discourse, but from the Stories of *Tellus*, *Cleobis* and *Bito*, whom he in-
 stances as *happy Men*, because of their *creditable Deaths*. The first he tells
 us died in Defence of his Country, after he had put his Enemys to
 Flight, he dyed nobly; and the Athenians buried him in the Place, where he
 fell, with much Honour. The two Brothers *Cleobis* and *Bito* drew their Mo-
 thers Chariot Forty five *Stadia*, and with the Stress died next Morning
 in the Temple, and so died honourably. And any one that will give
 himself the Trouble to read *Ovid's* Story of *Acteon* in his third Book of
 his *Metamorph.* will see it clear, as the Day, that he meant just the same.
 He represents how happy one might have thought *Cadmus*, considering
 how many Things he had that were desirable in his Lot, a *Kingdom*, *Re-*
lations and *Children*, had not *Acteon* his Grand-child's Fate interrupted the
 Series of his Joies, and made him miserable: Whereupon the Poet con-
 cludes, *Till Death a Man cannot be call'd Happy*, that is, till a Man has, with-
 out Interruption, enjoyed a Tract of Prosperity, and dies creditably,
 without any Mixture of ill Fortune.

Qvid. Metamorph. Lib. 3. Jam stabant Thebæ: Poteras jam Cadme, videri
 Exilio. felix: Soceri tibi Marsque Venusque
 Contigerant: Huc adde Genus de Conjuge tanta,

Tot Natos, Nataſque, & Pignora cara Nepotes.
Hos quoque jam Juvenes : ſed ſcilicet ultima ſemper
Expectanda Dies Homini eſt, dicique beatus
Ante Obitum Nemo, ſupremaque Funera debet.
Prima Nepos inter Res tot tibi Cadme, ſecundas
Cauſa fuit Luctus, &c.

And thus he proceeds to tell the Story of *Acteon*, his being transform'd into a Hart. Thus we ſee with what Candour our Author quotes the *Heathens*. Here he has firſt broke off ſome Words, from their Context, whereby the unwary Reader is tempted to believe, That the Speaker meant quite another Thing, than really he did ; and then obtrudes this falſe Senſe of one or two Mens Words, who were wiſe Men, and in their Thoughts far above the Vulgar, as the harmonious Meaning of the *Gentile* World.

Nor do I think it ſtrange that our Author could ſerve us ſo, ſeing he was prepoſſeſs'd in Favours of the *Heathens Religion* before he began to read their Books. For he tells us in the Entry of his Book, the very firſt Sentence of it, and more fully in the reſt of the firſt Chapter, That he was at once very concern'd for the *Divine Providence*, and withall fully convinc'd that it could not be maintain'd without there were a *Religion common to all Men* ; or as his Words formerly quoted by us, expreſs it, *Unleſs every Man was provided with the Means that were needful for Attaining future Happineſs*, ſo he went to the Books of the *Heathen* under a Perſwaſion that there was a *common Religion* there, could he be ſo lucky to light on it, and therefore no Doubt he drew and ſtrain'd Things to his Purpoſe, both Rites and Words : Thus he begins his Diſcourſe about Expiation ; “ Quosdam P. 195.

“ *Gentilium Ritus*, qui in Senſum ſaniores trahi poſſunt,
“ jam tractaturus, &c. And indeed he draws them to a ſounder Senſe, than ever they put on 'em. But after all, *forc'd Prayers are not good for the Soul*, ſays the *Scots Proverb*. And from one thus prepoſſeſs'd, we can expect no fair Account of the *Gentiles* Sentiments.

Which, by the Way, gives me Occaſion to remark, That, if any one deſires to underſtand the Mind of the *Heathen Philoſophers* and *Sages*, they would read 'em themſelves, or *Heathens* Accounts of their *Lives* and *Actions*, rather than thoſe done by *Chriſtians* ; becauſe very oft, when *Chriſtians* write their *Lives*, they have ſome Deſign, and they ſtrain every Thing in the *Philoſophers* to a Compliance either with their

their Designs or Apprehensions; The *Heathen Writers*, being again under no Influence from the Scripture Light, do plainly narrate Things as they are, not being so sensible of what Things may reflect really upon the Persons concerning whom they write, the *Light of Nature* not representing clearly that *Wickedness*, which is in many of their Actions and Opinions, and scruple not to tell them out plainly; whereas, *Christians* being aware how odious such and such Practices or Principles are, scarce to tell such Things of those famous Men, as they were really guilty of; because they know how deep a Stain it will leave on 'em, by those who are taught the *Evil* of 'em by the *Scriptures*.

I shall add this Reflection more: If any one would conclude from our Author's Confidence, in some Places of his Book, where he talks of many Reasons that he has advanc'd, and that he has demonstrate this and that; if, I say, from this they would infer, That he was fully perswaded in his own Mind, about these *five Articles*, that they *universally obtain'd* and are *sufficient*, he would very far mistake our Author, who, throughout his Book, sufficiently bewrays his *Uncertainty* about 'em, and that he wanted not a *Fear*, lest it should not be true, as some Things afterwards to be pleaded, will show. But lest this should seem to be said altogether without Ground, I shall single out one Instance of our Author's Wavering in this Matter, reserving others to another Occasion, It is P. 19. where, after our Author has discours'd of the *more famous Names* of the *true God*, and shew'd that the *Gentiles* apply'd them all, save one, to the *Sun*, he concludes thus, " Hæc saltem
 " fuere Solenniora summi Dei Nomina inter *Hebræos* extantia, quæ
 " etiam ad Solem, *Sabazio* excepto, a *Gentilibus* reducta fuisse, ex Supra-
 " allatis Conjecturam facere licet. Adeo ut quamvis superius Sole Nu-
 " men sub hisce præsertim Vocabulis coluerunt *Hebræi*, Solem neque ali-
 " ud Numen intellexerunt *Gentiles*, nisi fortasse in Sole, tanquem præ-
 " claro Dei summi Specimine, & sensibili ejus, ut *Plato* vocat, Simu-
 " lacro, Deum summum ab illis cultum fuisse censeas: Quod non fa-
 " cile abnuerim, præsertim cum Symbolica fuerit omnis ferè Religio
 " Veterum. But perhaps, tho' our Author was not well confirm'd in his Opinion, when he began his Book, yet he came to some more Fix'dness before he got to the End of it. Well, let us hear him, in his Censure of the *Gentiles Religion* in the last Chapter of his Book: Where

P. 223.

speaking of the *Worshipping of the Heavens*, the *Sun*, &c. he gives his Judgment thus, " De hoc quidem Dog-
 " mate, idem ac de priore censeo: Nempe, nisi Sym-
 " bolicus

“ bolicus fuerit, erroneum mihi prorsus videri Cultum illum. Cæ-
 “ terum quod Symbolici fuerunt Olim hujusmodi Cultus, multæ, quas
 “ Supra adduximus, *suadere videntur* Rationes: Sed suo Judicio heic
 “ quoque utatur Lector. What more Uncertainty could any bewray,
 than in those Words our Author doth? And indeed here we have
 enough to overthrow his whole Book: For if this *first Article* fall, all
 will fall with it, as we may see afterwards.

But it is now Time that we draw to a Conclusion of this Chapter,
 having sufficiently enervated our Author's Arguments, so far as we could
 discern them: If any of them seem to be omitted; I presume they
 will be found to be of no great Consideration, and of an easy Dispatch
 to any that is acquaint with this Controversy. Our Author's Way of
 Writing made it somewhat difficult to find his Arguments. And indeed
 upon serious Reflection, I can scarce understand at what our Author
 aim'd in this Way of Writing. He could never rationally expect that
 this would clear the Subject he had undertaken. I had almost concluded
 that his Design behoov'd to be an Ostentation of Knowledge of the
Heathens Religion, in Order to make his Authority have the more
 Weight, and to dare People from intertaining a different Opinion con-
 cerning the *Religion* of the *Heathen World*, from that which one who had
 so industriously search'd into their Writings, own'd. But if this was it, our
 Author has miss'd it. And I think instead of doing the *Deists* Cause
 any Service this Way, he has rather hurt it: For every one that shall
 peruse this Work with Attention, and find how great our Author's
 Learning, Diligence and Industry have been, and yet how little he has
 been able to do, they will infer the Weakness of the Cause he has un-
 dertaken, and conclude, That the Cause could bear no better Defence,
 and that therefore a weak and indefensible Cause has baffl'd our Au-
 thor's great Abilities, and Application. For

----- *si Pergama Dextrâ*
Defendi possent, etiam hac Defensa fuissent.

C. Blount and they who have come after our Author, as has been
 said, do but copy after him, and take his Notions upon Trust, but
 others will be somewhat more wise, and will look whom they trust
 in a Matter of this Importance.

CHAP. XV.

Wherein it is made appear that Herbert's five Articles did not universally obtain.

WE have in the preceeding Chapter sufficiently shew'd how weak our noble Author's Proofs are of his *universal Religion*. It now remains that we prove that what he pretends is indeed false. Our work here is far more easy, than what our Author undertook. He asserts that *Providence* cannot be maintain'd, unless all mankind are provided in the Means needful for attaining *future Happiness*, and he is likewise clear, That less cannot be allowed *sufficient* for this End, than the *five Articles* mention'd, wherefore he pretends that all the World agreed in owning those. Now to have made this last appear, it was needful it should be proven by Induction of all particular Nations, that they thus agreed, and that as to all Times; but this would have been somewhat too laborious. We maintain that all did not agree in the Acknowledgment of those *five Articles*: And this is evinc'd, if we can shew any one Nation dissenting from any one of them. But we shall not be so nice upon the Point, as only to mention one Nation, or disprove *one Article*. Let us take a separate View of each Article, and see what the Judgment of some Nations were concerning 'em.

ARTICLE I.

All the World did not agree in owning the One True Supreme God.

I Might for Proof of this only desire any Person to read our Author's Book, and there he would find this sufficiently clear. But I shall shortly confirm it to the Conviction of any, who has not a Mind to shut his Eyes, by the few following Observations as to the World's Sentiments in this Case.

I. It is most evident to any one, who will give himself the Trouble to read

read never so little of the Writings of the *Gentiles*, That many Nations, I had almost said most Nations, did hold a *Plurality of Eternal and Independent Beings*, on whom they depended, and which they call'd *Gods* in the properest Sense of the Word. *Herodotus*, quoted by our Author, tells us, *That all the Africans worship the Sun & Moon only*, "Soli & Lunæ solummodo sacrificant, & quidem Afri universi. And *Plato*, quoted likewise by our Author, a few Pages after, in his *Dialogue*, which he calls *Cratylus*, tells us, "Qui Græciam primi inco'uere, ii videntur mihi illos solum Deos existimasse, quos nunc etiam Barbari multi pro Diis habent, Solem, Lunam, Terram, Astra, Cælum. Of this also the ancient Inscriptions mention'd by our Author, and more particularly by *Hornbeck* in his Treatise *De Conversione Gentilium*, is a Proof, "Soli invicto & Lunæ æternæ Deo soli invicto *Mythra* & omnipotenti Deo *Mythra*. *Mythras* was a Name given to the Sun by the *Persians*, as our Author proves. And if we may believe *Maimonides*, the *Sabeans* own'd no God save the Stars. "Notum est *Abrahamum* Patrem nostrum educatum esse in Fide *Sabaorum*, qui statuerunt nullum esse Deum, præter Stellæ. Nor were the *Egyptians* of another Mind. *Diodorus's* Testimony is worth our Notice to this Purpose, "Igitur primi illi Homines Olim in *Aegypto* geniti, hinc Mundi Ornatum conspicientes, admirantesque universorum Naturam, duos esse Deos, & eos *Æternos* arbitratrati sunt, Solem & Lunam: Et illum quidem *Osiridem*, hanc *Isidim* certa Nominis Ratione appellarunt.

P. 36. de Rel. Gent.

P. 39.

P. 26.

Hornbeck P. 19.

More Nevochim, referente. Hornbecubi supra. P. 17.

Owen Theolog.

Lib. 3. Cap. 5.

Herbert P. 39.

Thus we see what the Apprehensions of several Nations were, and how harmonious they are in Dissenting from our Author's Assertion. It had been easy to have alledg'd many more Testimonies even from our Author against himself: But we aim at Brevity.

II. It is not improbable, that some Nations, tho' they might allow some Priority of one of their *Gods* to the rest, yet did not think that there was any such great Inequality, at least, amongst there more notable *Deities*, as could infer the Supremacy of one to the rest, and their Dependence on, and Subordination to him. We find every where equal Honours pay'd, equal or very little different Titles of Respect given to the

Sun or Moon. So that 'tis very likely, tho' they might give the *Sun* the Preference in Point of Order, yet they did not apprehend any such great Inequality, as seems needful betwixt one *supreme Being* & his *Dependents*. The People of *Mexico* in *America*, tho' they worship many *Gods*, yet look on their two principal Ones, whom they call *Vitzilophuchtili* & *Tezcatlipuca*, as two Brothers. " *Me-*

Hornbeck P. 70.

Ibid.

" *xicani* primo colere soliti fuerunt immanem Deorum Turbam, Bis Mille referunt, inter quos duo præcipui *Vitzilopuchtli* & *Tezcatlipuca* duo Fratres, quorum alter Rerum Providentiæ, alter Bellis præerat. And the Inhabitants of *Darien*, *St. Martha* and other Places thereabout, own only the *Sun*, and the *Moon* as his Wife. Further it is own'd by our Author several Times, That many Nations hold two *first Beings*, one *Good*, and another *Evil*, whom they call'd *Ve-Jupiter*, and by the *Persian Magi* he was call'd *Arimanius*. Tho' our Author thinks

De Rel. Gent. P.
163.

a softer Construction is to be put on their Meaning, than to charge them with Making their *Ve-Jupiter* equal with the *Good God*: But we know our Author must not be allow'd to interpret, unless he can give good Grounds for his Opinion about the Meaning of the *Gentiles*, which in this Case he doth not once attempt, and we know that some look'd on this *wicked Principle* as the *Supreme*, as we shall show anon, and I think it will be hard to clear some of them, yea even no less a Person than *Plutarch*, from

Nichol's Confer.
P. 2. P. 57.

making them *Equal* & both *Infinite*; if we may believe a late Author, who tells us, " That as for *Plutarch*, " one of the soberest of the *Philosophers*, he was " the horridest *Poly-theist* of them all; for he asserts " two *Supreme Anti-gods*; one infinitely *Good*, and the other infinitely

Orac. of Reas. P.
194.

Evil. Moreover, some of the *Deists* do not think this Opinion destitute of Probability, as we have noted above. But whatever there is as to this, yet

III. It is certain that many of them, notwithstanding the hudge Number of *Gods* they maintain'd, were yet utterly ignorant of the *true God*. This is so evident, that I cannot but wonder at our Author's Impudence in Denying it, especially, after the Testimonys we have already quoted from him. We have heard already that the *Egyptians* and *Grecians* of old own'd no other *Gods* besides the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*. And we have heard the same of the *Sabeans*, several *Americans* and Inhabitants

habitants of *Africa*; and *Cesar* tells us the same of the *Germans*; "Deorum Numero eos Solum ducunt, De Bello Gallico
 " quos cernunt, & quorum Opibus aperte juva- Lib. 6.
 " mur, *Solem & Vulcanum & Lunam*; reliquos ne
 " Fama quidem acceperunt. Yea, our Author is forc'd to make a
 fair Confession, and contradict himself in the Entry of his fourth Chap.
 where Speaking of the *Gentiles* and their *Worshiping*
 of the *Sun*, he delivers himself thus, "Incongruum De Rel. P. 20.
 " demum existimaverant, ut qui Cultum ab omnibus
 " flagitaret, a Cultoribus suis sese absconderet Deus. Solem igitur
 " Deum fere omnes *Gentiles* statuebant, non Summum quidem, sed
 " Summo proximum, ejusque præclarissimam Iconem, licet alii Mun-
 " dum totum, tanquam Deo plenum, summi Numinis Imaginem speci-
 " osam apprimè præ se ferre contenderent. Here ye see our Author
 positive, that they put not the *Sun* in the Room of the *One True God*:
 None of them did it; but ye shall hear him in the very next Sentence
 tell us, That they did discard the *true God*, and very Absurdly put a-
 nother in his Place. "Certe uti olim dictum (*says our Author*) qui
 " Solem Vice summi Dei coluerunt, perinde fecere, ac illi qui ad Aulam
 " potentissimi Principis accedentes, quem primum Amictu splendido
 " indutum cernerent, Regium illi Cultum deferendum existimaverant.
 And our Author knows full well, That at *Athens* there was an Altar
 erected to the *unknown God*, and *Paul* expressly tells 'em, That this *unknown*
God was the *true God*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly Worship, him declare I
 unto you. What says our Author to this? He directly contradicts the
 Apostle, and then makes him a Complement, that is well nigh to Non-
 sense. "Cæterum, *says he*, duriusculè Deus ignotus Atheniensium ad
 " Deum Judæorum refertur: Ut ita priora S. S. loca Deum Gentilium
 " eundem ac communem omnium Deum evincant. Nam Deus ille ig-
 " notus Atheniensium alius certè fuit, (*this is a plain Contradiction to the*
 " *Apostle's Assertion*) atque ideo puto Arâ donatus, ne aliquis forsan in-
 " cultus apud illos esset Deus: Ut bellè tamen hinc instruendi Gentiles
 " Occasionem captarit Apostolus. Neque Dubium mihi est, quin e Li-
 " bro Naturæ edocti Deum summum tum agnoverint, tum colue-
 " rint Gentiles. Thus we see quam bellè, how pleasantly our Author
 proceeds. He tells us that it is hard to think, tho' the Apostle expressly
 says so, That this *unknown God* was the God of the *Jews*. But if we
 will not stand to our Author's Say, then he tells us what some Scriptures
 he had formerly cited, prove; viz. Act. 10. passim Act. 17. 28, 29. Rom.

1. 19. But we have above shew'd, That these are not for our Author's Purpose. Well, what then remains? Nothing, but only this: *I have no Doubt*, says he, *but they knew the true God*. But our Author's Certainty will not satisfy another; and we just now shew'd, That our Author was not so fully sure, as he pretends to be in this Place. But yet our Apostle, he tells, took very handsomly Occasion hence to instruct the *Gentiles*, that is, if we believe our Author, he took Occasion from a false Supposition to instruct them. But this is Kindness that he us'd any Complement, tho' a ridiculous one. But leaving this, I go on.

IV. They among the *Nations*, who own'd *One Supreme God*, did frequently, if not for most Part, put some others in the Room of the *true God*. Some made the *World God*. This is what

Mibi P. 70.

Balbus the *Stoick* sets up for with all his might in *Cicero's* second Book *de Nat. Deor.* throughout. "At-

"qui certè nihil omnium Rerum melius est *Mundo*, nihil præstabilius,

"nihil pulchrius: Nec solum nihil est, sed ne cogitari quidem quic-

"quam melius potest: Et si Ratione & Sapientiâ nihil est melius, ne-

"cesse est hæc inesse in eo, quod *Optimum* esse con-

P. 83.

"cedimus: And therefore a little after he concludes the *World, God*. *Cicero* himself was of the same

Mind: For, when *Velleius* the *Epicurean* had been heard and refuted by *Cotta* the *Academick*: And *Epicurus* his wild Opinions about the Gods, had been fully expos'd, which is the Subject of the *first Book*; *Balbus* the *Stoick* proposes and defends the *Stoicks* Opinion about the *Nature, Being, Number* of the Gods, and their *Providence*, and defends it after the best Fashion he can (where by the Way, there is not one Word of the *true God*, but a full Discovery of the grossest Ignorance of him, and the greatest Wickedness and Folly in Asserting a *Plurality* of Gods, and Parting all the *Excellencies* of the *true God* among them) This makes up the *second Book*. In the *third Book*, *Cotta* the *Academick* disputes against, and exposes the *Stoicks* Opinions, as defended by *Balbus*; and in the last Sentence of the Book, *Cicero* gives his *ἐπιτίσις* or Censure of the whole in these Words. "Hæc cum essent dicta, ita discessimus, "ut *Vellei Cotta* Disputatio verior, mihi *Balbi* ad Veritatis Similitudinem "videretur esse propensior. *Velleius* the *Epicurean* favours *Cotta*, who disprov'd the whole Opinions about the Gods, & put no better in their Place. And *Cicero* was pleas'd with *Balbus*, who maintain'd the *Stoicks* Sentiments. What they were we have just now noted. And whether *Plato, Aristotle*, yea and *Socrates* were not of this Opinion, is not so very clear.

Certain

Certain it is, that they pay'd a little too great Respect to the *World*, if they were not. Let us hear our Author. *Plato in*

Timeo et Legibus dicit & Mundum Deum esse & Cælum & Astra, &c. But whatever were their Sentiments, 39.

it is not of so great Consequence to the Question under Consideration, to spend Time in enquiring, since it is evident that many were of this Opinion. Others thought that the *Heaven* was God,

and this is own'd by *Ennius* the Poet, quoted by our Author, in that noted Verse so frequently mentioned P. 54

by *Cicero*, *Aspice hoc sublime candens, quem omnes invocant Jovem*: And there also he tells us of an old Inscription found at *Rome*, *Optimus Maximus Cælus Aternus*:

Thus we see the *Heavens* dignify'd with those very Epithets, which our Author pretends to have been peculiar *Ibid.*

to the *Supreme God*. And he tells us, That some are of Opinion, that *Pythagoras* inclin'd this Way: And our Author leaves it in Doubt.

If *Aristotle* & *Plato* were not of this Mind, That the *Heavens* were the *Supreme God*, as we see some others were; yet they did own *Heaven* for God, & to be worshipped as such. "Sed non so-

lummodo Cælum Divino Honore colendum decreverant Sacerdotes, sed et ipsi Philosophi celebriores, adeo ut non *Stagira* tantum, sed *Eminus* ejus Præceptor ita statuerint. But the most prevalent Opinion was, That the *Sun* was the one true and supreme God: That many, and perhaps most Nations thought so, the Testimonies above-alledg'd fully prove, and we have hear'd our Author confessing it as to some. I shall only add a few Remarks mo to this Purpose. There is a Quotation of *Macrobius*, which I find in our Author,

that is worth noticing, "Assyrii (inquit *Macr.*) quem

"Deum summum maximumq; venerantur, *Adad* P. 24.

"Nomen dederunt, ejus Nominis Interpretatio significat *Unus*. Hunc ergo ut potentissimum adorant Deum, sed subjungunt Deam Nomine *Atergatin*; omnemque Potestatem hisce duobus attribuunt, *solem Teramque* intelligentes. And our

Author further acquaints us as the *Persians*, "Quod P. 28.

"*Perse* duo Principia statuebant, *Oromazen* scil. tan-

"quem boni Fontem: Et *Arimanium*, mali. -- Inter quos medium & qua-

"si Arbitrum posuere *Solem*. I have in the Close of our former Chapter, quoted a notable Passage from our Author to the same

Pur-

This is fully proven by Dr. Owen, Hornbeck and others in their Books formerly referr'd to.

See Owen's Theolog. Lib. 3. Cap. 4. P. 182.

Hornbeck P. 31.

"lonius (whom the Heathens compar'd to our blessed LORD, most blasphemously and groundlessly) worshipp'd the Sun: And we have Appolonius's Prayer to the Sun, recorded by Philostratus in his Life Lib. 1. O summe Sol, eo me Terrarum mitte, quo me profecturum esse cognoscis, & concede, precor, ut Viros bonos agnoscam; Improbos vero neq; agnoscam, neq; agnoscar ab illis. Yea after the Light of the glorious Gospel

Owen ubi supra Lib. 3. Cap. 5. P. 194.

had clear'd the Philosophers Eyes, and made them ashamed of much of their Religion, yet even the Platonick Philosophers could not quit the Thoughts of the Sun's being God.

But not only did some look on the Sun as the Supreme God; but if we may believe Hornbeck, who was at great Pains to understand the Religions of the World, and particularly of America; several Nations in America, particularly the Inhabitants of New-france, and they who inhabit about the River Sagadahoc, worship principally the Devil or a malignant Spirit.

Thus we have fully demonstrate what we undertook, and hereby quite spoil'd the whole Story of an universal Religion: And our Author has been so unhappy, as to lay to our Hands many of the Arguments, whereby we have disprov'd his own Position. This Step being once gain'd, we shall be more brief in the Consideration of the remaining Articles: For they all fall with this. If there is a Mistake as to this, there can remain nothing sincere in Religion. If the true God is not known, he can not be worshipp'd, and Rewards and Punishments cannot be expected from him; nor can we be sensible of, or sorry for any Offence done against him

him. So that we might stop here, as having ruin'd wholly that Cause our Author undertook to defend : But we shall consider the rest also.

ARTICLE II.

It was not universally agreed, That the One True GOD is to be Worshipped.

HOW could they agree as to the *Worshipping* him, whom they did not know to be ? If it would not fright the Persons concern'd, I might here pertinently ask them the Question, the Apostle puts *Rom. 10. 14. How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ?*

And further, even they who own'd *one supreme God*, many of them entertain'd such Notions of him, as made him unworthy of any Worship. He tells us that many of them lock'd him up in Heaven, denying his *Providence* ; and one would almost think our Author had been of their Opinion, while he tells us, *Rectè dictum De Rel. Gent. P. est olim, quod Æternum Beatumque est, nec Negotii quicquam habere, nec exhiberi alteri.* 174.

But whatever our Author's Thoughts were, it is well known, that this Opinion prevail'd very far, and obtain'd amongst many, if not most Nations, who own'd *one Supreme God*, besides the *Sun*. And they were further of Opinion, That God had committed the whole Management of the World to Deputies. Our Author informs us, That the Ancient *Heathen's* divided their Gods into *Supercelestial*, *Celestial* and *Subcelestial* : And P. 170.

he tells us, That the *chief God*, and his Companions, the *Supercelestial Gods* have not only such Concernment in, or Regard to the Things that are transacted in this World, as to make 'em take any Notice of them : And that the *Supreme God* has withdrawn himself, and the *Supercelestial Gods* from the View of *Mortals*, as being of too sublime a Nature to be known by them : And that he has deputed the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars* to inspect the World, as the only *Gods* who can be enjoyed by Men. " Deum summum vero se- P. 171.

" ipsum supercœlestesq; Deos a Conspectu Mortalium
 " removisse, quod sublimis adeo essent Naturæ, ut nulla eos Acies satis
 " pertingeret, ejus Loco non in Conspectum solum, sed in Fruitionem
 " quandam produxisse Deos illos cœlestes, qui a nobis *Sol*, *Luna*,
 " *Cœlum* &c. vocantur. And the *Indian Bramines* seem indeed to
 be

Hornbeck P. 40. be of this Mind, as we know the whole followers of *Epicurus* were. Yea, the Inhabitants of *Calecut* a Kingdom in the *East-Indies*, are so absurd, as to imagine that the *Devil* is God's *Deputy*, to whom the Government of the World is committed: And hence they Worship the *Devil* principally, (as likewise do the Kingdoms of *Decan* and *Narsinga*) and " their King has in

See *Calecut* in " in his Oratory the Image of the *Devil* with a Crown
great *Geogr. Dic-* " on his Head, so very frightful, that the most Re-
tion. " solute tremble at the Sight of it: The Wall is all

" painted with lesser Devils; and in each Corner
" stands one of Brass, so well done, that it seems all in Flames. Now if such Notions are entertain'd of God, it is no Wonder tho' he be by many thought not worth the worshipping. The Consequences of those Apprehensions I cannot better express, than *Cicero* has done in the very Beginning of his first Book *de Nat. Deorum*. " *Sunt enim Philosophi, &*
" *fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent humanarum Rerum Pro-*
" *curationem Deos: Quorum si vera Sententia est, quæ potest esse Pie-*
" *tas? Quæ Sanctitas? Quæ Religio? si Dei neque possunt nos juvare,*
" *nec volunt, nec curant omnino, nec quid agamus animadvertant; nec*
" *est quod ab his ad Hominum Vitam permanare possit: Quod est,*
" *quod ullos Diis immortalibus Cultus, Honores, Preces adhibeamus?*
And much more to the same Purpose. Tho' he speaks of a *Plurality* of *Gods*, yet what he says, holds true as to the Case in Hand: For if we intertain, or if the *Gentiles* did intertain, as we see some of them did, such Notions of their *Supreme God*, as he here speaks of, the same Consequences must follow; & it is not credible that any, who thought so, could judge the *Supreme God* worthy of *Worship*. And indeed we find them no Way concern'd about it.

In fine, Not a few of the wiser Sort, who intertain'd the most just Thoughts of God of any, yet being in the Dark as to the Way of *Worshiping* God, have declar'd against any *Worship*, at least in Practice, till it should by himself be condescended on. Thus it is as to the wiser Sort among

the *Chinese*.--" *De Deo eoque colendo non sunt solliciti.*

Horbeck *ubi supra* P. 47. " *Unumquidem agnoscunt Summum Numen, a quo om-*
" *nia conservari & regi credunt: Sed, quia quomodo*

" *coli velit, ignorare se profitentur; satius autumant*
" *Cultum ejus omittere, quam in eo designando errare.* And perhaps the best *Philosophers* in other Nations, were not of a different Mind. Thus we see how far they were from being agreed about *this Article*.

ARTICLE III.

The Gentile World were not agreed in judging that Vertue and Piety are the Principal Parts of the Worship of God.

HOW it should come into our Author's Head to think that they were agreed, is a little strange, considering how little is to be found among their Writers that looks this Way. But I suppose the Case was this, He had concluded that they were agreed about the *Being* of *one true God*, and to make his Religion compleat, he behooved to have them some Way agreed about his *Worship* too. But he found 'em endlessly divided about their *solemn Worship*, and none of it directed to the *one true God*, but all expressly aim'd at other Things: Wherefore there was no other Thing left that could be to his Purpose, and therefore he finding that there was somewhat that all the World agreed in, paying some Respect to, at least, in Words, under the Name of *Vertue*; he would needs appropriate this to the *true God* for his *Worship*, tho' he has no Warrant from the *Gentiles* to do so. And truly after all, if this was the *Worship* of the *true God*, or design'd as such, whatever Agreement there might be in Opinion about the *Worship* of the *one true G O D* I think there was none in *Practice*, if not in a total Neglect of it: For how few were there, who can have the least Pretence to challenge that Name amongst all those, whose Names have been transmitted to us? How true was the Poet *Juvenal's* Observation,

*Rari quippe Boni, Numero vix sunt totidem quot
Thebarum Portæ, divitis vel Ostia Nili.*

But to leave this, and come to the Point in Hand somewhat more closely,

I. It is evident that the World was very far from being agreed, That there is *one God*: Far more were they divided about the Acknowledgment of the *true God*, and whom they should own as such. It was therefore utterly impossible that they should condescend on this, as a *principal Part* of the *Worship* of God, whom they did not know to have any *Being*.

II. So far were they from looking on *Vertue* as the *principal Part* of the *Worship* of the *Gods*, whom they own'd, that the *Worship* of many of their *Gods*, was thought to consist in Things that were cross to the plainest

See this fully proven in the learn'd and excellent Dr. Owen's *Treatise de Justitia vindicatrice* from P. 66 to 100, by authentic Testimonys, with such Remarks as may be worth the reading.

plainest Dictates of *Nature's Light*. Our Author acquaints us frequently with the *Obscenities*, the *Cruelties*, and other *Extravagancies* of their *Worship*. The *Obscenities* are too fulsom to be repeated. The furious *Extravagancies*, religious, or rather superstitious *Fury* and *Madness* us'd in the *Worship* of *Bacchus*, are known to every one. And for their *Cruelty*, who knows not that humane *Sacrifices* were almost universally us'd? Some offer'd *Captives*, some offer'd *Strangers*, some sacrificed their dearest *Relations* and *Children*, and that in the most cruel Manner.

III. We need go no further than our Author's Book, to learn, That most Nations were so far from looking on *Vertue* as any Part of the *Worship* due to any of those Gods they own'd, that they plac'd it wholly in such other Things, as our Author, amongst others, has given us a large Account of.

IV. They, who were most zealous for *Vertue*, were very far from looking on it as a Part of the *Worship of God*, or directing it to his *Glory*. I believe our Author, were he alive, for all his reading, would find it difficult to find one fair Testimony to this Purpose. They look'd not on themselves as Debtors to God for their *Vertue*. Hence *Cotta*, after he

has acknowledg'd that we are indebted to God for our *Riches* and *eternal Enjoyments*, adds; "*Virtutem Cic. de Nat. De- or. P. mihi 187. Lib. 3.*" autum Nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, " nimirum recte: Propter Virtutem enim laudantur,

" & in Virtute recte gloriamur; quod non contin- geret, si id Donum a Deo haberemus. ---- Hence a little after, adds he, " Nam quis quod bonus Vir esset, Gratias Diis egit unquam! And much more to the same Purpose. They thought that

their *Vertue* made them equal to their Gods." Hoc est Seneca Epist. 48. " quod Philosophia mihi promittit, ut me parem Deo faciat. Yea not only so, but they pretended their *Vertues* plac'd them above their Gods. " Est aliquid, quo Sapiens

Idem Epist. 53. " antecedit Deum, ille Naturæ Beneficio, non suo, Sa- piens est. And again, Deus non vincit Sapientem Epist. 73. " Felicitate, etiam si vincit Ætate: Non enim est

Virtus major, quæ longior. Hence they will not have us so much as to pray to God, either as to *Vertue* or *Felicity*. it is a mean Thing to weary the Gods. " Quid Votis Opus est? Epist. 31. " Facto felicem. And much more to the same Purpose.

ARTICLE IV.

It did not universally obtain, That Repentance is a sufficient Expiation; or, That we must repent for Offences done against the true God.

OUR Author has acknowledged, That there is rarely Mention of this amongst the Ancients: and we have already, by Quotations from him, cleared that the *Ancient Heathens* did not think it a *sufficient Expiation*. and indeed that it was of no great Consideration among them, is sufficiently evident from their not taking any Notice of it, even when the fairest Occasions present themselves. And finally, there can be nothing more certain, than that their *Repentance* could not aim at the Offence done to the true God, of whom many of them were utterly ignorant. But what has been said is sufficient to shew that it did not *universally* obtain in any Sense, that can turn to any Account to the *Deists*.

ARTICLE V.

It was not universally agreed, That there are Rewards and Punishments after this Life.

I. **H**OWever many there were that maintain'd the *Immortality* of the Souls of Men, it is certain, that there were very many *Dissentients*, who were of a different Mind, and that of all Sorts of People.

The fam'd *Sects* among the *Indians*, which they call *Schaerwaecha Pasenda* and *Tscheectea*, if we may believe *Hornbeck*, P. 34. *Hornbeck* in his Account of them, all deny a future *abi supra*. State.

Nor are wise *Chinese*, at least many of them, of a different Mind. They are divided in three *Sects*. The first *Sect* of their *Philosophers* are the Followers of the fam'd *Confucius*, their *Morals* are refin'd, as perhaps these of the most polite Parts of the World, if not more. But as to the Soul, they seem to make it a Part of God, which at Death returns to that first Principle, whence it was broke off. Let us hear *Possennus's* Account of them; as to this Matter he

Hornbeck, P. 47, 48. says, They maintain "Hominis Cor esse unum & eandem Rem cum illo primo Rerum Principio ; cumque Homo moritur, Cor perire prorsus & absumi, superesse tamen ex eo primum Principium, quod Vitam ante conferebat. And further, they maintain, Posse Hominem in hac Vita summam Principii cognoscendi Perfectionem adipisci, & meditando pervenire ad maximam Vitæ Tranquillitatem, & hoc esse summum Bonum, quod donec obtineat, continuo Motu agatur, & de Inferno uno in alium conjiciatur, usque dum contemplando & meditando ad Fastigium pervenerit Tranquillitatis, quæ in Principio illo primo est. These are the Apprehensions of their best *Moralists*.

But there are other *two Sects*, that plainly declare against a *future State*, are for the *Mortality of the Soul*, and have no Prospect beyond Time.

Of this same Opinion were not on single Person, but many Sects of the ancient *Philosophers*, whom Cicero mentions, and concludes his Account of them thus. ----- "His Sententiis omnibus nihil

post Mortem pertinere ad quemquam potest : Pariter enim cum Vita Sensus amittitur. And a little after, speaking of the Opposition made to *Plato's Opinion about the Immortality of the Soul*, he says,

Ib. P. 340. "Sed plurimi contra (*Platonis* scil. Sententiam) nituntur, Animosq; quasi Capite damnatos Morte mulctant. And some Passages after, speaking of the same Opinion, he says, "Catervæ veniunt Contradicientium, non solum *Epicureorum*, quos equidem non despicio, sed nescio quomodo doctissimus quisque contemnit. Accerimè autem Deliciæ meæ dicæ Archus, contra hanc Immortalitatem disseruit : Is enim tres Libros scripsit, qui *Lesbiaci* vocantur, quod *Mytelinis* Sermo habetur : In quibus vult officere Animos esse Mortales : *Stioci* autem Usuram nobis tanquam Cornicibus : Diu mansuros aiunt, Animos semper regant.

Nor were they otherwise minded, many of them in *Greece*. When *Socrates* vents his Opinion of the *Immortality of the Soul*, that Day before he died, *Cebes* one of his Disciples, who is the Conferrer, or one of them, at least, that maintains the Discourse with him, addresses him in those Words, "Socrates, I subscribe to the Truth of

all you have said. There is only one Thing that Men look upon as incredible, viz. What you advanced of the Soul : for almost every Body fancies, that when the Soul parts from the Body, it is no more,

Plato's *Phedon*
done into English
from *M. Dacier's*
Trans. V. 2. P. 100

" more, it dies along with it ; in the very Minute of Parting it evaporates like a Vapour or Smoke, which flies off and disperses, and has no Existence.

Yea, *Pliny*, *Strabo* and many others declare against the Immortality of the Soul ; nay, *Pliny* on set Purpose, disputes against it. *Oweni Theolog. Lib. 1. C. P. 174.*

And the Poets go the same Way. It were easy to multiply Proofs of this from them. *Seneca* speaks the Mind of many of them, tho' perhaps not his own. *Troja A. 1.*

*Post Mortem nihil est, ipsaque Mors nihil.
Velocis Spatii Meta novissima.*

*Quæris quo jaceas post Obitum Loco ;
Quo non mala jacent. Et
Tempus nos avidum devorat & Chaos,
Mors individua est, noxia Corpori,
Nec parcens Anima.*

Persius and all the Poets made Use of this as an Encouragement to give Way to themselves, in whatever Lust prompted them to.

*Indulge Genio, carpamus Dulcia ; nostrum est.
Quod vivis, Cinis, & Manes, & Fabula fies.*

If it be said, That this is an Irony, and that he was not in earnest ; it were easy to multiply Quotations to this Purpose from *Horace*, *Catullus*, and most of the Poets, which are not capable of any such Construction. But I forbear.

And albeit, *Cicero* was for the Immortality of the Soul ; yet in his first Book of *Tusculany Questions*, he plainly derides the whole Business of Rewards and Punishments after this Life ; as any one, who will attentively peruse it, may see. I forbear to transcribe the Passage ; because I behoov'd to transcribe much to let see the Tendency of his Discourse. He plainly tells us, That he could be eloquent, if he had a Mind to speak against those Things ; *Disertus esse possem, si contra Ista dicerem.* The Case is plainly this ; That Person, whom he discourses, looks on Death as an Evil. *Cicero* tells him, That perhaps it is because he fears those Punishments after this Life, which the Vulgar believ'd, and after he has tartly redicul'd them,

Tuscul. Quest. Lib. 1. a little from the Beginning. P. mihi 312.

them, he concludes, That had he a Mind, he could enlarge against those Things, and plainly expose the whole Tradition.

But because some talk so much of *Plato*, *Socrates*, *Cicero*, and we get so many Quotations from them about the *Immortality of the Soul* and a *future State*; I shall here represent their own Opinion somewhat more fully.

As for *Socrates*, he has not write any Thing that is come to our Hands: all the Accounts we have of him are from *Plato*, *Xenophon* and others, but especially *Plato* his Scholar, who was with him at his Death: From him then we shall learn at once, what both his Master's Opinion and his own were in this Matter.

When *Socrates* is making his Apology before his Judges, he tells them, " That to fear *Death*, is no-
 Dacier's Plato " thing else, but to believe ones self to be wise,
 Vol. 2. P. 28. So- " when they are not; and to fancy that they know
 crates's Apology. " what they do not know. In Effect no Body knows
 " *Death*; no Body can tell, but it may be the greatest Benefit of Man-
 " kind; and yet Men are affraid on't, as if they knew certainly that

" it were the greatest of Evils. And a little after
 Ibid. P. 40. speaking of *Death*, " What should I be affraid of
 " the Punishment adjudg'd by *Melitus*, a Punish-
 " ment that I cannot positively say whether it is Good or Evil?

And thus he concludes his Apology. " But now,
 Ibid. P. 47. " it is true we should all retire to our respective Of-
 " fices, you to live, and I to die. But whether you
 " or I are going upon the better Expedition, 'tis known to none, but
 " God alone.

Again, in that fam'd Discourse on this Subject, before his *Death*, after he has produc'd all the Arguments he can for the *Immortality of the Soul*, he tells us pretty plainly, how Things stood with him. " Convincing the Au-
 Plato's *Phedon* " dience of what I advance, is not only my Aim; in-
 P. 135. 136. " deed I shall be infinitely glad that it come to pass; but my chief Scope
 " is to perswade my self of the Truth of these Things; for I argue
 " thus, My dear *Phedon*, and you'll find that this Way of Arguing is
 " highly useful (very true to Folk that are not certain and can do no
 " better, and only to these.) If my Propositions prove true, it is well
 " done to believe them, and if after my *Death* they be found false, I
 " will reap that Advantage in this Life, that I have been less afflicted by
 " the

“ the Evils which commonly accompany it. But I shall not remain
 “ long under this Ignorance. And when he is near his Close, and just
 to take the Poison, or a little before having represented his Thoughts
 about *Rewards* and *Punishments* after this Life, which are little better
 than those of the *Poets*; he concludes his Account in these Words,
 “ No Man of Sense can pretend to assure you, That all these Things are
 “ just as you have heard. But all thinking Men will be positive, that
 “ the State of the Soul, and the Place of its Abode, is absolutely such
 “ as I represent it to be, or at least, very near it, *provided the Soul be*
immortal.

More might be alledg'd to the same Purpose; but this is sufficient to
 let us see how wavering *Plato* and his Master *Socrates* were. They talk
 confidently sometimes; but presently they sink again. Let us
 next see what *Cicero's* Mind was. He treats this Subject, on set Pur-
 pose, in his first Book of *Tusculany Questions*, which is wholly spent on
 this Subject. He undertakes to shew and prove against the Person
 whom he instructs, That *Death is not Evil*, whether we are dissolved
 quite or not: And having, as he fancies, proven that *Death is not an*
Evil, he proceeds and gives us this Account of his

Underatking. “ I shall teach you, *Speaking of* P. 325.

“ Death, if I can, *si possim*, That it is not only *not Evil*,

“ but *Good*: But a little after he tells us clearly what we may expect
 from him, when his Hearer exhorts him to go on;

says he, “ *Geram tibi Morem, & ea quæ vis, ut* P. 326.

“ *potero, explicabo: Nec tamen quasi Pythius Apol-*

“ *lo, certa ut sint, & fixa quæ dixerò: Sed ut Homunculus unus e multis*

“ *Probabilia Conjecturâ sequens, ultra enim quo progrediar, quam ut*

“ *Verisimilia videam, non habeo: Certa dicent ii, qui & percipi ea*

“ *posse dicunt, & se Sapientes esse profitentur.* And speaking about

this Opinion, his Auditor tells him, how pleasant

this is to him. It will be a little pleasant to hear them P. 329.

speak. “ *A. Me vero delectat: Idque primum ita*

“ *esse (scil. Animos esse immortales:)* Deinde etiamsi non sit, mihi tamen

“ *persuaderi velim. M. Quid tibi ergo Operâ nostrâ Opus est? Num*

“ *Eloquentiâ Platonem superare possumus? Evolve diligenter ejus eum*

“ *Librum, qui est de Animo: Amplius quod desideres nihil erit. A.*

“ *Feci meherculè, & quidem sapius: Sed nescio quomodo, dum lego,*

“ *assentior: Cum posui Librum, & mecum ipse de Immortalitate Ani-*

“ *morum cœpi cogitare, Assentio omnis illa elabatur.* After he has in-

structed

instructed his Hearer, he professes his Resolution to stand by this Opinion; but gets a Caution from his Instructor, that lets us see how Things stand. " *A. Nemo me de Immortalitate depellet. M. answers, Laudo id quidem, etsi nihil nimis oportet confidere: Movemur enim sæpe aliquo acutè concluso: Labamus mutamusque Sententiam clarioribus etiam in Rebus: In his enim est aliqua Obscuritas.* And if ye would know what his Reason was for insisting so long on the Proof of this, he tells us near the Close, That it was to banish the contrary Suspicion, which was troublesome. Much more might be adduc'd, but what has been said sufficiently demonstrates how fluctuating and uncertain the best of them were, in Reference to this important Point.

If any shall say, That tho' these great Men upon some Occasions, express'd themselves with some Hesitation, and did insinuate some Suspicion that the opposite Part of the Question might be true, yet upon other Occasions they are positive; and that this is as good an Evidence of their being firmly perswaded, as the other Expressions are of their Hesitation. I answer, the Consequence is naught. A seeming Positiveness upon some Occasions, may be the Result of the joint Influence of a strong Desire, that the Thing should be true, and some philosophical Querk urg'd for its Support: For as *Cicero* well observes in the Words last quoted, *Movemur sæpe aliquo acutè concluso*; and this especially hads true, where there is a strong Inclination to believe the Thing, as being of obvious Advantage to us. Now this may be, where there is no Certainty or firm Perswasion. I readily own that these great Men favour'd the *Immortality of the Soul*: But I positively deny, That they receiv'd it with that Firmness of Assent, that is not only due, but unavoidable to Truths, which carry their own Evidence along with them. And I moreover aver that the *Deists*, in quoting some of these Assertions from them, wherein they seem positive, suppressing other Expressions, wherein they discover a Hesitation, do but abuse the Reader's Credulity; and give neither a full nor fair Account of the Judgment of these Men.

CHAP. XVI.

Wherein some general Considerations are laid down for proving that many of the best Things, which are to be met with in the Heathens, were not the Discoveries of Nature's Light, but came from Tradition.

Notwithstanding the gross Ignorance, which overspread the Heathen World, was very great; yet it cannot be deny'd that there are very many surprizing Hints of Truth to be found, in many of their Writings, in Reference even to Matters of Religion.

The *Deists* take up whatever they meet with of this Sort, and confidently give it out, That all this they discover'd by the *meer Light of Nature*.

There are, who on the other Hand, will scarce allow them to have made any of those Discoveries by the *Light of Nature*; but ascribe whatever Hints of Truth are to be met with, to *Tradition*. This is said to be the Opinion of *Eusebius* and *Scaliger* by Dr. Owen. And it is of late maintain'd by Mr. *Nicolls* the ingenious Author of the *Conference with a Theist*: For which Mr. *Becconsal*, the Author of a late Treatise concerning the *Law of Nature*, is much displeas'd with him, and takes him to Task.

Theol. Lib. 1. C. 8.
Parag. 4.
Confer. Part 2.
Page 32, 33, &c.
Beccon. of the Law
of Nature C. 4. P.
54, 55. &c.

I design not to make my self a Party in this Debate. I think that there is somewhat of Truth on both Sides: But if either think to carry the Mater to the Utmost, I think also there will be Mistakes on both Hands. It's too much to say that they discover'd nothing in Reference to Religion by the *meer Light of Nature*: And on the other Hand it favours of gross Ignorance to say that all we meet with in the Writings of the ancient *Sages*, was discover'd by the *Light of Nature*. Nothing is more evident, than that many Things have been handed from

Nation to Nation, and Age to Age by *Tradition*. This no modest Man will or can deny; it has been so clearly made out by many.

What I assert, and shall attempt to prove, is, “ That many of the
 “ most notable Things that we meet with in the *Heathen Writers*, in
 “ Matters of *Religion*, are not to be look’d on as Discoveries made by
 “ the *Light of Nature*; but as *Truths*, whereof they were inform’d by
 “ *Tradition*. And moreover, that when we find them asserting *some*
 “ of those *Truths*, which to us, who enjoy the *Scriptures*, and by the
 “ *Scripture* have our *Reason* improv’d, appear to have a Foundation in
 “ *Reason*, we are not therefore to conclude, That *Reason* led them to
 “ those *Truths*; but rather, that in many Cases, they had even these
 “ from *Tradition*.

In proving this Point, I shall not proceed by single Instances, but shall lay down these general Considerations, which at once clear the Truth of our Assertion, and discover whence these Traditions might come, and how easily they might be convey’d to them. Particular Instances may be had in great Abundance from those, who have, of set Purpose, largely insisted on this Subject. Amongst others, *Huetius* in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, has largely discours’d of particular Instances of this Nature. I think the following Observations taken together and duly considered, will put our Assertion beyond Question with the Sober and Judicious.

I. It’s most certain, That the *Jews*, however in other Regards inconsiderable, which makes it still the more observable, had more full, clear and certain Knowledge of the *true God*, *Religion* and *Matters of Worship*, than all the World besides. If the *Deists* please to controvert this Proposition, we shall debate it with them when they please. And I dare be bold to say, That I shall prove that there is more *true* and *rational Divinity* in One of the Books of *Moses*, than they shall be able to find in *all the Heathen Writers*, when they have put all, that has been said by all of them, together.

II. Their Neighbours, and more especially the *Egyptians*, had many fair Occasions of obtaining Acquaintance with their Opinions and Practices in *Matters of Religion*. Several Persons at distant Times, went out from the *Church*, and settl’d in distant Nations. *Ishmael* went out from *Abraham’s* Family, and *Esau* from that of *Isaac*. Now it cannot be suppos’d, how wicked soever these Persons were, but they would carry out with them some *true Notions*, *Opinions* and *Practices* in *Matters of Religion*. Nor can it reasonably be deny’d, That they founded their *new Governments*, on some of these *Notices*, tho’ variously blended

blended and mixt with corrupt Additions and Alterations, both in Matters of *Opinion* and *Practice*. And it is evident, That these Hints, or Remainders of Truth, in Matters of *Opinion* and *Practice*, as they were mixt with these Corruptions, would obtain a general and great Respect, as being found useful for maintaining *Order* in Societies, as being delivered to them, by the first Founders of their Nations, as being commended by their *Practice* and perhaps establish'd by *Laws* and *Constitutions*. Whence it is not possibly to be suppos'd that these *Notices* or *Practices* could in an Age, or a few Ages wear out.

Again, it is particularly observable in this Case, That the *Church* was, for a long Tract of Time, in a wandring and unsettl'd State; which oblig'd them to more of Intimacy with the Nations that lay near them, than afterwards was necessary, when they were settl'd in a Land, by themselves apart, and were, by *divine Constitutions*, barr'd from that Familiarity.

Moreover, as to the *Egyptians*, they had much Occasion of being particularly acquainted with the *Jews* *Opinions* and *Practices*, in the *Matters of God*: The *Israelites* dwelt among them (besides what occasional Converse they had before) about 217 Years together. The Correspondence was again renew'd in *Solomon's* Time by his matching with the King of *Egypt's* Daughter. *Jeremiah*, and a great Company with him, stay'd a considerable Time in *Egypt*, and prophesied there to the *Jews*, who had at that Time no separate Dwellings, and prophesied concerning *Egypt*; which, together with the Reputation he had got at *Jerusalem*, by his Predictions that were remarkably verify'd, the Notice taken of him by the King of *Babylon*, and the Contests he had with those of his own Nation, could not but make him much regarded.

It is further considerable, That there were many Things, which may reasonably be suppos'd to excite an uncommon Curiosity in the *Egyptians*, to understand the *Religion* of the *Jews*. It is known what a Place *Joseph* long had in *Egypt*, and how he manag'd it. Afterwards the People, while under Bondage, were scattered through the Land, and the Piety of some of them appearing in their Sufferings, could not but be taken notice of, as their Scattering through the Land gave Occasion to the *Egyptians* to enquire, as to the Principles that influenc'd it. The miraculous Appearances of God on behalf of that People in *Egypt* and their Neighbourhood, in the Wilderness, would have excited the Curiosity of a People, much less inquisitive, than they were. The Reputation of *Solomon*, his Alliance with the Crown of *Egypt*, and his Traffick with them, as they gave a new Occasion, so could not

but spur them on, to enquire further into Matters of this Sort. If, to all this, you add the general Character, Writers of all Sorts give of the *Egyptians*, That they were a People more than ordinarily fond about Matters of *Religion*, in so much that our Author *Herbert* observes, They are said to be the first that taught *Religion*; and if further it is considered, That the *Gentiles*, finding the Unsatisfactoriness of their own Opinions and Practices in *Matters of Religion*, were very much inclin'd to Change, and adopt the Customs, Practices and Way of every Nation in *Matters of Religion*, to try if they could find any Thing more Satisfying than their own. If, I say, all these are laid together, it cannot be doubted that the *neighbouring Nations*, and particularly the *Egyptians*, learn'd many Things from the *Jews* in *Matters of Religion*.

III. It is observable, That all these Things fell out a considerable Time before any of those great Men appear'd or flourish'd in the World, whose Writings are come to us, and contain those Truths, concerning the Rise whereof we now Discourse.

The seven *Sages*, *Thales*, *Solon*, *Pittacus*, *Bias*, *Chilas*, *Periander* and *Cleobolus*, who raised the Reputation of *Greece*, did not flourish till about the Time of the *Babylonish Captivity*, and long after the Dispersion of the ten Tribes, some do reckon it *Le Clerk Comput. Hist. P. 35 40.* 125 Years. *Socrates* and *Plato* flourish'd not for near 150 Years after these again. Now these are among the first, who made any considerable Figure for Learning of this Sort, in the *Heathen World*, whose Writings are come to us.

IV. All these great Men did, for their own Improvement, travel into *forreign Nations*, and made it their Business to learn their *Opinions* and *Practices*: Particularly we are told of the most considerable of them by *Diogenes Laertius*, and others, That they were very concern'd to know the Opinions of the *Egyptian Priests* in *Matters of Religion*, and most of what they knew in these Matters, was taught them by those. This will be deny'd by none, that is acquaint with the Lives of those Persons.

V. It is further observable, That, in many Instances, there is such a plain Resemblance in their Opinions to the Scripture Accounts of the *Origin of the World*, the *Deluge*, the *Peopling of the Earth*, and most other Things, as could not be casual; but shews plainly that they were deriv'd thence. This in particular Instances, by many, particularly *Hue-*

ius and others, to whom he refers, is so fully demonstrated, that it cannot, without manifest Impudence, be deny'd.

VI. Which comes yet somewhat nearer to our Purpose, it is very observable even as to those Truths, which have some Foundation in *Reason*, such as these, about the *Immortality* of the Souls of Men, and their *State* after *Death*, and the like, that these great Men of old propos'd them commonly, without offering any Proof of them, or any Reasons for them. Now it is not credible that, if they had been led to those *Notices* by *Reason*, they would have offer'd those important *Truths*, without offering Reasons of them. This Observation we find made, as to its Substance, tho' not on such Views, by no less a Person than *Cicero*, who knew as well how Matters then stood, to speak modestly, as any now can do. Speaking of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the ancient *Philosophers* Sentiments about it, he says, "Sed redeo ad Antiquos. Rationem illi Sententiæ suæ non ferè reddebant, nisi quid erat Numeris aut Descriptionibus explicandum---- *Platonem* ferunt primum de Animorum Æternitate non solum sensissè idem, quod *Pythagoras*, sed Rationem etiam attulissè.

VII. Nor is it less considerable to prove, That the Notions, which prevail'd about the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a future *State*, and the like may be said of many others, were not learn'd from *Reason*, but from *Tradition*; and that the Impression and Persuasion of these *Truths* were more generally intertain'd, and more strongly riveted among the *Vulgar* than among the *Philosophers*. Whole *Shoals* of them or *Catervæ*, as *Cicero* above-quoted speaks, deny'd and derided all these Things, which the *Vulgar* firmly believed. This Observation I find made by the learn'd *Dr. Owen*, "Cum Mundi Conditu Judicium post hanc Vitam exercendum, Famam catholicam obtinuit. Eam etiam Persuasionem comitata est Immortalitatis Animarum Presumptio, quæ quamvis Rationi etiam innitatur, tamen cum maxime semper apud *Vulgus*, potius quam scopis obtinuit, non nisi Traditioni adscribenda est.

VIII. When these great Men of old do give Reasons of their Opinions, they are such, as any one may see, never led them to *Opinions*: But having, by *Tradition* receiv'd them, they were asham'd to hold 'em, without being capable to give any Reason for what they held, and therefore, they set their Wits on the Rack to find out what to say for them. And it was but seldom they hit on the true ones. For most part their Reasonings are plainly childish, trifling and sophistical: It

were

were easy to demonstrate this. As to the Arguments of *Socrates* and *Plato* for the *Immortality of the Soul*, they are plain *Sophisms*: And upon what Design they were urg'd, we have heard before to confirm themselves in an Opinion, the Belief whereof was accompanied with some Advantage. A learn'd Person says justly, "That *Plato* endeavours
 " to prove the *Immortality of the Soul* by such Reasons, Dr. How living
 " as, if they conclude any Thing, would conclude it Temple, Pt. 1. P.
 " to be a *God*. And the same may be said of *Cicero* 122.
 and others.

IX. It is moreover remarkable, to this Purpose, that not only are there many Things to be met with in the Writings and Practices of the ancient Writers amongst the *Heathens*, whereof no colourable Reason can be given, nor any Account made otherwise, than by ascribing them to ancient and corrupted *Traditions*; but it's further Remarkable, that they knew not how to manage or improve those Hints, which were this Way handed to them. Most of them quite spoil these Things in the telling. A few of the more wise, conscious of their own Ignorance, yet wanting Humility and Ingenuity enough to acknowledge it, wrap themselves in Clouds, and express themselves darkly, to conceal their own Ignorance from the Vulgar, and one that understands, would not know whether to laugh or be angry, to see their fond Admirers, in later Ages, sweating to fetch sublime Meanings from Words which the Writers themselves really understood not.

X. In the last Place, we find the Ancients themselves, on some Occasions, owning, that they owed the first Discoveries of these Things to *Tradition*. *Dacier* in the *Life of Plato*, tells us, "That he first instructs them
 " in Religion, about which he establishes nothing, without having consulted God; that is, nothing but what is conformable to true *Tradition* and ancient Oracles. To evince the Truth of

Plato de Legibus, this, *Plato's* own Words are subjoin'd, *God*, sayeth *Lib. 4.*

. *Plato*, as we are taught by ancient Tradition, having in himself the Beginning, the Middle and End of all Things, always goes on in his Way, according to his Nature, without ever stepping aside, he is followed by Justice, which never fails to punish the Transgressions committed against his Law. And a little after speaking about the Punishments of the Wicked, he proceeds thus, "They are not limited to the Miseries of this Life, nor to Death
 " it self, from which even good Men are not exempt; for these are
 " Pen-

“ Penalties too light and short, but they are horrible Torments. But yet more remarkable to this Purpose are his Words in his Epistles, *Antiquis vero sacrisq; Sermonibus Fides semper habenda, qui declarant Animum nobis esse immortalem, et Judices habere, quorum Decretis, pro Merito Præmia et Supplicia maxima attribuantur, ut primum quis e Corpore decesserit.* Plato Epist. 7.

Lay these Things together, & as they are in themselves evident enough; so I think they amount to a full Demonstration of the Assertion, we have above laid down, for the Proof whereof we adduc'd them; and they do abundantly shew, how inconsiderately every Thing met with in ancient Writers, is put upon the Score of *Nature's Light.*

C H A P. XVII.

Wherein we consider what Herbert's Opinion was as to the Sufficiency of his Articles, and offer some Reflections, shewing how foolish, absurd and ridiculous the Deists Pretences to their Sufficiency are.

WE have now demonstrate that these five Articles did not universally obtain in the World, and that consequently the Heathen World had not the Means necessary to Salvation.

But should we grant what has been above evict-ed false, That these Articles did universally obtain, yet all is not done, nor is the Difficulty so got over; for we are not agreed, that these, tho' acknowledg'd, are alone sufficient.

We know our Author would bear us in Hand, that they are sufficient. He tells us to this Purpose, that when he had found them out, he saw that there was nothing wanting to make a compleat Religion.

“ Quum hæc igitur eximias Veritates seorsim paratæ, disquisivi
 “ porro, quid hisce adjecerint, vel quidem adjicere possint Sacerdotes,
 “ unde certior Fidei circa Salutem Æternam daretur Norma, aut Vitæ
 “ Integritas Sanctitasq; magis promoveretur, aut communis ubique
 “ stabili-

“ stabiliretur Concordia. Videbam satis alia atque alia hic addi posse,
 “ quin et addita fuisse ; sed quæ Veritates hasce obstruerent, enerva-
 “ rentque potius, quam Vim Roburque illis conciliarent. And indeed
 our Author is so bold to challenge all the World to shew what can be
 added to these *five Articles*. “ Ut viderent interea Antistites, Præfulesq;
 “ per totum Orbem diffusi, quid hisce quinq; Articulis, addere potue-
 “ rint : Unde vera illa Virtus, quæ Homines Deo similes, Confortioque
 “ ejus dignos efficit ; vel Pietas, Puritas Sanctitasq; Vitæ magis pro-
 “ moveri possint. And growing bold, by this imaginary Success, he
 proceeds to inveigh, tho’ more covertly against the *Satisfaction of Christ*
 as destructive to *Piety*. Of which he gives a most disingenuous Ac-
 count, as commonly he does of *all the Articles of Reveal’d Religion*, which
 he has Occasion to mention.

But however confident our Author is, of the *Sufficiency* of his *five Articles* in this place ; yet elsewhere he shews he had not over much
 Certainty in his own Mind, about this Matter : For some Pages after, he
 says, *Et quidem quinque hosce Articulos bonos, catholicosque esse unusquisq; Dubio*
procul fatebitur ; ad Salutem tamen Aeternam comparandam non sufficere prohibe-
bunt nonnulli, ceterum, qui ita locutus fuerit, ne ille quidem audax ; nedum sævum
temerariumq; Effatum (mea Sententia) protulerit ; quum nulli satis ex-
plorata sint Judicia Divina ; quam etiam ob Causam, neque ea sufficere
protenus dixerim : attamen magis probabilis mihi videtur, eorum Opinio, qui
æque piè ac leniter de Dei Judiciis statuunt, dum Homo, quod in se est, præstat ;
neque enim in cujusve Potestate est, ut Fides sive Traditiones quantumvis
laxe (præsertim ubi aliqua ex Parte controvertuntur) ad se satis pertingant,
neque tandem recta communiq; Ratione quinq; Articulis nostris addi potest Dogma ;
unde magis pii, sincerique evadunt Homines ; aut Pax, Concordiaq; publica magis
promoveatur. Here our Author is more modest.

Thus we have seen what his Opinion is ; it now remains that
 we offer some Reflections on it. Many offer themselves : I shall only
 touch at a few.

I. Tho’ the *Deists* are as desirous as any, to confine *Religion* to a nar-
 row Compass, and perhaps it’s as much their Interest, as it is of any
 Sort of Men, that it should consist of *few Articles* ; yet, for Shame, they
 cannot make it contain less, than those *five Articles*. They own and
 must own all those Necessary to Salvation, both in Belief and Practice.
 It’s not possible, they themselves being Judges, to reach the *Ends* of
Religion, if any of them are cut off. Since then we have above
 prov’d that these did not universally obtain, it’s plain, that all Mankind
 had

had not *sufficient Knowledge of Religion*. Thus it is in Fact.

But now where shall the Blame of this be laid? On themselves? On the Priests? Or on God? This last cannot be said.

Well then, must these Villains for Priests, with whom our Author and all the succeeding *Deists* are so angry, bear the Blame of it, in that they did not better teach and instruct the People, in the Grounds of *sincere Religion*? But tho' our Author, and all the *Deists* would fain lodge the Blame here; yet I am scarce satisfied of the Justice of the Charge; tho' I am willing to own, that they were for most Part Arch-villains: For how shall it be made appear that they themselves knew these Grounds of *sincere Religion*? I know our Author Blames them for not imparting the Knowledge of *sincere Religion* to the People, & that he may be sure to shut the Door upon them, that they may not escape, he

adds by Way of Parenthesis, *licet illis satis cognitam*. P. 180 *sub Finem*.

But how proves he this, That they know, that *chast* and *sincere Religion* well enough? might not they be suppos'd ignorant of it, as well as most of the *Philosophers*, the *greatest Moralists* not excepted? Again, I don't well see what Right they had to teach, or how they were oblig'd. Did the *Law of Nature* authorize 'em to be publick Teachers? I believe the *Deists* think not. Was not every Man able to shift for himself, and find the Way to Blessedness? If he was, what need was there to trust these *villainous Priests*? who was oblig'd to listen to 'em? If every Man was not able, without the Help of some Instructor, then if that Instructor fail'd in his Duty, as it is certain they did almost perpetually, nay our Author will not allow, nor see I any need of that *almost*, what becomes of the *poor Vulgar*, who, without Instruction cannot reach competent Knowledge? He is not able to reach it, his Instructors fail of their Duty: And for any Thing I see, the poor Man wants, and must always want a *sufficient Religion*, and that without any Fault of his.

Well then, avoidably either every Man is able to do and know for himself, in Matters of Religion; or a great many, even most of the *poor Vulgar*, are lost for good and all; and there is no Help for it, and that without their Fault: If the last be said, our Author has lost his Point quite, and if this be a Fault, he will lay it at *Providence* its Door, that has not sufficiently provided all Men, in the Means necessary for their *future Happiness*: If the first be said, then the Blame must ly at every Man's own Door. But methinks our Author is not willing of this; for he would always excuse the *Vulgar*, and suppose 'em so rude and ignorant, that they had neither Will, Courage, nor Abi-

lity to step otherwise, than they were led. But after all, the Fault must be lodg'd at their Doors, or the *Deists* whole Cause is lost. I confess any one that was under such Impressions of their stupid Ignorance, as our Anthor seems to have been, will even think it hard enough to say that every one of them had *this Ability*, to find out a *sufficient Religion*; and I believe, not without Ground; tho' I still think, that they might have known, and done more than they did; but this will do the *Deists* Cause no Service.

2. But further, the *Deists* must own that *Natural Religion*, according to this Mould of it, at least, did never obtain in *Purity*, without any *Additions*, in any Place of the World. Our Author confesses, That on this Foundation, there was every where a strange Superstructure raised.

After he has spoken of *those Articles*, he subjoins,
 P. 212. *Hac igitur sincerioris Gentilium Religionis Partes fuerè; reliquæ vel commentitiæ Fabellæ, vel Archetypæ Nugæ, vel Scitamenta quædam prohiberi possunt: inter quæ (Damno Mortalium) nonnulla Insana, nonnulla etiã Impia visebantur.* Now, this being the Case, I would gladly know, if our Author's *five Articles* are look'd upon as of such Virtue, that they could hallow all these *Additions* made to them, or at least, so far antidote the Poison of them, that Persons, who embrac'd this *Complex Frame of Religion*, consisting of these *five Articles*, and such *Additions* as in every Nation, were made to them, might yet reach *Happiness*, or not.

It is pretended that these *five Articles* of *natural Religion*, tho' contaminate with these *Additions* (as our Author speaks when he enters upon his *Discourse* about those *Orthodox Points of*

P. 184 Cap 4. *Religion, Ritibus, Caremoniaq; contaminabantur, conspurcabanturq;)* are sufficient to lead to *Happiness*, then this is plainly to say, That the *Religion* of every

Herbert de Veritate P. 272. Country was good and sufficient, and that every one might be sav'd by that *Religion* he was bred in. If the

Defence of this is undertaken, it will be found a pretty hard Province, and one will not easily be able to defend, That the *complex Religion* of every Country was sufficient, or that the *Virtue* of *those Articles* was such, as to preserve from the Hurt of the *Additions*. What if, in the *complex Frame* of most *Religions* of the World, some of our Author's *fundamental Articles* are justl'd out of their own Place? Perhaps, while each *Religion* sets up for so many *inferiour Gods*, they rob the *One supreme GOD* of much of his *Glory*, to adorn these *imaginary Gods* with. It may be, more Stress is laid on *Rites* than on *Vertue*, which our

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Author makes the *principal Part of Worship*. Perhaps more Stress is laid on their *Rites for Expiation*, than on *Repentance*. What if the Additions made are such, as are utterly inconsistent with a due Regard to *these Articles*, or a just Improvement of 'em? What if there are other Things yock'd in with them in most Religions, that are as derogatory to the Honour of God, as these can be suppos'd conducive for its Advancement? How can such a horrid Medley of Things, *sound and unsound, orthodox Foundations and impious Superstructures*, be acceptable to God, or useful to Man? One half, to wit, our Author's *five catholic Articles*, is design'd to lead men to *Bliss*, pretend, the *Deists*: And the other, to wit, the *Rites and Ceremonies*, are design'd to the worst of Purposes, by those Villains of Priests, who aim at cheating the World. Now, how shall such cross Designs agree or consist? Or, how can Means adapted to so very different, nay, quite opposite Ends, be unite and hang together? Or, if they are unite, how can *that Religion*, which consists of such jarring and incoherent Materials, turn to any Account? But this Opinion is so ridiculous, that I need not insist in disproving of it. No Man of Sobriety can ever pretend that *these Articles* can be of any Use, if each of them is not kept in its own Place, and if Care is not taken to guard against all Additions, which are inconsistent with a due Respect to *those Articles*. Some little Additions, perhaps one might suppose would do no great Hurt: But if there are any, that entrench on the Foundations, and put 'em out of their Place, the whole Fabrick falls, and all is ruin'd. Now I think it were no hard Work to prove, That the *Additions* were such, in every Nation, as rendred the whole utterly useless, and insufficient to any of the most considerable Ends of Religion, either with Respect to God or Man.

But if it is pretended, That while those *five Articles* are asserted *sufficient*, it is only meant, that if Persons would abandon all those extravagant, destructive and filthy Additions, which every where are made to them, and only regard them, then in following these, they might attain to *Life and Eternal Happiness*: If, I say, this is alledg'd, then I would ask, How shall we distinguish betwixt *those Articles* and *others* that are interwoven with them, in each Country? By what Marks shall the *Necessaries* be known from the *not Necessaries*? The *Fundamentals* from the *Accessaries*? Is every Man able, with our Author, to dissect and inspect the *several Religions* of the Countries, where they live, and separate the *Necessaries* from these that are *not so*? Our Author found this a pretty hard Task: What shall poor mean People then

think of it? Our Author has shown what fair Pleas might be made for many of the most pernicious Parts of the *Religions* of the Nations. Would a poor Country Man be able to rid his Feet of such Fetters? It is utterly impossible that the one Half of Mankind could distinguish betwixt what was to be rejected, and what was to be retain'd. In a Word, it is evident, that all the World over, Things pernicious & destructive were so twisted in with Things of another Sort, and such fair Pleas made for them, that it was utterly impossible for the poor ignorant Vulgar to divide the one from the other. Since then these *five Articles* signify nothing unless they were sever'd from these other Things, which were every where interwoven with them, and most Part of Mankind were utterly unable to do this, which I doubt no Man ever did before our Author, it seems evident, that of whatever Use they may be to our Author, who was so sharp-sighted, as to spy them out and distinguish them from the other Things with which they were mixt; yet they can be of no Use to the far greater Part of Mankind, and consequently the far greater Part of humane Race still must be own'd destitute of the Means that may be justly term'd *sufficient* to lead 'em to *future Happiness*. These *five Articles*, as in Fact they have always been interwoven with other Things, were not *sufficient* to save any; and whatever their Force might be, if they had been sever'd from other Things, yet they not being so, before our Author did it, and most Part of Men being utterly incapable of making this Distinction, they must be looked on as *insufficient* to many, at least of Mankind, who therefore certainly were destitute of Means needful for *future Happiness*, and so left to perish. I know our Author pretends that some were able to distinguish, and did make a Difference betwixt *these Articles* and the

Additions: " Verum quinq; Articulos supra dictos

P. 211.

" (uti quæ in Corde describuntur) sine ulla

" Hæsitacione accipiebant olim *Gentiles* Dubio procul;

" de reliquis puto, ambigebant, tum ii præsertim, qui inter illos saltem
 " sapientiores existimabantur. How ill grounded our Author's Confidence as to the universal Acceptance of his *five Articles* is, we have seen above. What he subjoins about the *Gentiles* distinguishing the *Additions* that were made to them from them, comes not up to the Point: For the Question is not, Whether some could thus distinguish the one from the other; but, Whether all did or could? And when he pretends that some of the more discerning did so, what Proof advances he? Nothing but his bold *Puto*. This Reflection might be further urg'd, but I shall pass it, and proceed to another.

3. How shall one be satisfied that these *five Articles* are all that were *necessary*; or that they are *sufficient*? Are the *Deists* all agreed about this? No, we have heard one above making *Seven necessary*. Nay our Author is not too confident, as we have heard above, when he says, "*Quum nulli satis explorata sint Judicia divina; quam etiam ob Causam, neque eos sufficere protenus dixerim.*" We see our Author is not very sure about the *Sufficiency* of those *Articles*. But he seems pretty positive that there is no other *Article* discoverable by the *common Reason* of Mankind, that can be of any great Use, or that is *necessary* to answer the *great Ends of Religion*, the *publick Peace* and *Bettering* of Mankind. But we see the *Deists* are not all agreed here: Some think more needful. But I have two or three Words to say to all this; May no *Article* be allow'd *necessary* that is controverted? So our Author Insinuates: And *Blount* in his *Religio Laici* is positive oftner than once. Then I would know of the *Deists*, Have never these *Articles* any or all of them been controverted? Have not we already proven, That the *first Article* has been controverted, anent the *Being of One Supreme God*? Is not our Author's *third Article*, viz. That *Vertue* (as it is discoverable by the *Light of Nature*) is the *principal Part of the Worship of God*, disputed by *Christians*? Do not the Followers of *Spinosa* deny *Repentance to be a Duty*, and that in Compliance with their Master, who pretends to demonstrate in his *Ethicks*, That he who repents is twice miserable? Has not the *Fifth* been controverted by many of old? Let any who denys this, read *Cicero Lib. 1. Tusc. Quest.* or *Plato's Phedon*, and they will learn, That it has been controverted by mo of the wise Men than imbrac'd it. And don't very many of our *modern Deists* call it in Question? Again, have there not been some other *Articles* as universally agreed, as little controverted, and perhaps less than some of these? To give but one Instance, Has not the *Article* about the *Worship of God*, that He was to be worshiped with some *solemn external Worship*, whom we own'd as *God*, been as much agreed to, as any of the rest? Doth it not arise from the *common Reason* of Mankind? But I shall wave this.

4. There is another Thing, that I would know of the *Deists*, anent their *five Articles*. Do they think them, as they are propos'd, *sufficient*? or must they not be well explain'd? If, as they are propos'd, I would gladly

Compare P. 3 & 4.

Spin. *Ethicks* P. 4.
Prop. 54. *Pœnitentia Virtus non est, sive ex Ratione non oritur, quem Facti pœnitet, bis miser seu impotens est.*

gladly see the Man that can have the Face to maintain, what is not only untrue, but ridiculous. Will, for Instance, the owning *Vertue*, to be the *principal Part* of the *Worship of God*, signifie any Thing to the World, while they know not, and are not agreed what is *Vertue* and what is *Vice*? Is not this to mock the World, to propose general Articles, and tell the World is agreed about them, while yet one Half is not agreed what is the Signification of these general Words? Is not this plain Cheat? 'Tis true, *Blount*, who has copied all from our Author, as the present *Deists* do from him, tells us that *these Articles* must be well explain'd. "Neither can I, says he, imagine so much as one Article more in *common Reason*, "that could make Man better, or more pious, when the forefaid were "rightly explicated and observ'd. But now, are not these *Articles sufficient*, unless rightly explicated? No, he dares not say it. Well, was the World agreed about this right Explication of them? Who ever did rightly explain them? Point us to the one Person who did it, either for himself or others? Was every Body able to do it for himself? If not, then I fear the World wanted still a *sufficient Religion*, after all Pains taken to provide 'em in one. And further, What is the Meaning of our Author's wording the *third Article*, That *Vertue is the principal Part of the Worship of God*? This may be true, tho' it be not the *only Part*. Well, tho' it is the *principal Part*, may there not be *another Part necessary*? Tho' perhaps the Head of a Man is the *principal Part*, yet there are some other Parts necessary. Was not the World as much agreed that there should be *another Part*, as that this was a *Part* of the *Worship of God*? I believe it is easy to prove the World was more agreed as to the *first* than the *last*. Why then must this be overlook'd? I believe I could guess pretty near; He was affrai'd to do it, because he saw that he would presently be confounded with the Differences about the *Way of Worship*, and that he would never be able to maintain, That *Reason* was *sufficient* to direct as to the *solemn Worship of God*: And that, if he should assert it, he would have not only *Christians* to dispute the Point with him, but *Heathens*. But lest it should be thought what is alledg'd of the *Heathens* looking on *Reason* as incompetent for this, is groundless, I shall only copy you a little of *Socrates* and *Alcibiades's* Discourse about Worship out of *Plato*, or rather remind the Reader of what we quoted from him. *Socrates* meets *Alcibiades* going to the Temple to pray, and dissuades him from it, because he knew not how to do it, till one should

come

come and teach him. *Soc. says*, "It's altogether necessary you should wait for some Person to teach you how you ought to behave your self, both towards the Gods and Men. *Alcib. replys*, And when will that Time come, *Socrates*? And who is he that will instruct me? With what pleasure should I look on him? Whereupon *Socrates* bids him hope that God will do it, and will take the Mist off his Soul, and cure him of that Darkness, that hinders him from Distinguishing betwixt Good and Evil. Whereupon *Alcib.* says, I think I must defer my Sacrifices to that Time. To which *Soc. returns*, You have Reason: It is more safe to do so, than run so great a Risk. And the same *Plato* elsewhere tells us, "That this Instructor must be a Person somewhat more than humane. Nor was *Jamblicus*, a famous *Platonick Philosopher*, who liv'd in the fourth Century, otherwise minded, whose Words, as I find 'em translated by Mr. *Ferguson*, run thus, "It is not easy to know what God will be pleased with, unless we be either immediately instructed by God our selves, or taught by some Person whom God hath convers'd with, or arrive at the Knowledge of it by some divine Means or other.

M. Dacier's Plato Englished, Vol. 1. P. 249, 250. Second Alcibiad: Or of Prayer.

Lib. 4. de Lege Civ. by Dr. Leslie against the Jews. P. 386. Ferg. Enquir. into mor. Vertue, &c. P. 177. Jambli. de Vita Pythag. Cap. 28.

5. There is another Thing that I would gladly be inform'd anent, and that is, Whether every Sort of Knowledge of them be sufficient? Or, is a clear, certain and firm Perswasion needful? If the first, How can a dark, uncertain and wavering Knowledge have that Influence upon Practice, and that Vigour to excite to a Compliance with them, which is absolutely needful in Order to attain the Benefit of them? If the latter, How will our Author prove, That it was any where to be met with, as to them all, in the *Heathen World*? Or, how will he make it appear, That it is attainable by *meer Reason*? Methinks our Author's Words above-noted, as to the fifth Article, seem not to import any great Certainty. This might be urg'd to that Degree, that it would be very hard, nay, I fear not to say, impossible for the *Deists* to rid their Feet of it.

6. I would further know, Will these five Articles be sufficient to this End to lead to *eternal Happiness*, whether Men direct to it or not? Is not the Intention of some Consideration in *moral Actions*? And what if I should deny that the Religion of *Heathens* was directed to this End, the

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Obtaining of future Happiness? If I should, I know some very great Men are of my Mind. I shall name two, the one a Christian, the other a Heathen. The first is the famous Samuel Puffendorf Counsellor of State to the late King of Swedden. His Words are worthy to be here transcrib'd, tho' somewhat long. " Now to look back

" to the first Beginnings of Things, we find, That before the Nativity
 " of our Saviour, the Inhabitants of the whole Universe, except the
 " Jews, liv'd in gross Ignorance as to spiritual Affairs. For what was
 " commonly taught concerning the Gods, was for the most Part in-
 " vol'd in Fables, and most extravagant Absurdities. 'Tis true, some
 " of the learn'd among them have pretended to give some rational Ac-
 " count concerning the Nature of the Gods and the Soul; but all this
 " in so imperfect and dubious a Manner, that they themselves remain'd
 " very uncertain in the whole Matter. They agreed almost all of them
 " in this Point, That Mankind ought to apply it self to the Practice of
 " Vertue; but they did not propose any other Fruits, but the Honour
 " and Benefits, which thence did accrue to civil Society. For what
 " the Poets did give out concerning the Rewards of Vertue and Punish-
 " ments of Vice after Death, was by these, who pretended to be the
 " Wisest among them, look'd upon as Fables, invented to terrify and
 " keep in Aw the common People. The rest of the People liv'd at ran-
 " dom, and what the Heathens call'd Religion, did not contain any
 " Doctrine or certain Articles concerning the Knowledge of Divine Mat-
 " ters. But the greatest Part of their Religious Worship consisted in Sa-
 " crifices and Ceremonies, which tended more to Sports and Voluptuous-
 " ness, than to the Contemplation of divine Things. Wherefore the
 " Heathen Religion did neither edify in this Life, nor afford any Hopes
 " or Comfort at the Time of Death. Thus far he. Now methinks
 here is a quite different Account of the Heathen World from that
 which our Author gives us, and that given by no Church Man, but a
 States Man; and one as learn'd as our Author too, and that both in

P. 227.

History and the Law of Nature, as his Works evince,
 and in my Opinion 'tis the juster of the two Ac-
 counts. The Second is Varro quoted by our Author,
 who divides the Religion of the Heathens into three Sorts, *Primum Genus*
appellat Mythicon, Secundum, Civile, Tertium, Physicum.
 See it also in Au- The First is that of the Poets, which is altogether
 gust. de Civit. Dei, fabulous. The other which he calls Natural, is that
 Lib. 6. Cap. 5. of the Philosophers, which is wholly employ'd about
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the Nature of the Gods. And *Varro* expressly says, It was not meet for, nor of any Use to the *Vulgar*. The *third Sort* was what he calls *Civil*, which was wholly calculate for *humane Society*, and its Support; and to this all the *publick Worship* belong'd, if we may believe *Varro* in the Passage we now speak of. When he has open'd the Nature of each of them, he concludes with an Account of the Design of them. "Prima Theologia maxime accommodata est ad Theatrum: Secunda scil. Naturalis ad Mundum: Tertia ad Urbem. No Word here of *eternal Life*, as the Design of any of them. The Passage it self fully excludes it, and, had it not been too long, had been worthy to be transcrib'd.

7. To draw to a Conclusion, Was it enough to the *Heathens* that these Things were *sufficient*, albeit they did not know them to be so? Or was it needful that they should know them to be so? If the *last* be said, How could they be sure about that, even the *vulgar Sort* of them, that our Author after all his Application to this Controversy, could not win to be sure of? If the *first* be said, I would ask any *Deist*, Was not the End of *natural Religion* fix'd, and were they not certain? Or might they not, at least, be fix'd and certain about it? If it was not, how could they use or chose Means, or direct them to an *End* which was not fix'd, and they were not certain about? If it was, then with what Courage could they use Means with Respect to an *End* and *Means*, in the Use of which they had so many Difficulties to grapple with; yet they could not be sure that they were *sufficient* by the least Use of them to gain the *End*? Was it enough of Encouragement, That they might use them all Adventures, not knowing whether they were, in themselves, *sufficient* to reach the Mark or not? Methinks our Author is very defective as to Motives to excite to *Vertue*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Containing an Answer to some of the Deists principal Arguments for the Sufficiency of Natural Religion.

WE have now considered what the *Deists* plead from *universal Consent*; and have sufficiently clear'd that it is not by them proven, That the World was *agreed* as to *these Articles*; That indeed the World did not *agree* about them; That even they who own'd them, were led to this Acknowledgment, at least of some of them, rather by *Tradition* than *Nature's Light*; And that tho' they had acknowledg'd them, they are not *sufficient*. It now remains that we consider those Arguments, wherein they conceive the great Strength of their Cause to ly.

The first Argument, which indeed is the strongest the *Deists* can pretend unto, is thus propos'd by their admir'd *Herbert*:

De Rel. Gent. P. 4. “ Et quidem quum Media ad Victum, Vestitumque
“ heic commoda suppeditant cunctis *Natura* sive
“ *Providentia* Rerum communis, suspicari non potui, eundem Deum, sive
“ ex *Natura*, sive ex *Gratia*, in suppeditandis ad beatiorum hoc nostro
“ Statum, Mediis, ulli Hominum deesse posse vel velle, adeo ut licet
“ Mediis illis parum rectè, vel feliciter usi sint *Gentiles*, haut ita tamen
“ per Deum optimum maximum steterit, quo minus salvi fierent. To
the same Purpose speaks *Blount* in his *Religio Laici*, and *A. W.* in his
Letter to him in the *Oracles of Reason*, of whom afterwards. The Force
of all that is here pleaded will best appear, if is put into a clear Argument,
and I shall be sure not to wrong it in the Proposal. The Argument runs thus,

The Goodness of God makes it necessary that all Men be provided in the Means necessary for future Bliss.

But all Men are provided in no other Means of Attaining future Bliss, save Nature's Light.

Therefore no other Means are necessary for all Men save the Light of Nature.

The

The *Minor* or *second Proposition* needs not be proven, since it is own'd by those, who maintain *Revelation*, That it is not given to all Men, and therefore that many have indeed no other *Light* to guide them, save that of *Nature*, in Matters of *Religion*, or, in any of their other Concerns.

The *first Proposition*, That the *Goodness* of God makes it *Necessary* that all Men be provided in the Means of Attaining future *Blessedness*, is that which they are concern'd to prove. And the Strength of what they urge for Proof of it, amounts in short to this;

The Goodness and Wisdom of God seem to render it necessary that all Creatures, but more especially the Rational, be provided in all Means necessary to obtain those Ends they were made capable of, and oblig'd to pursue.

But Men are made capable of, and oblig'd to pursue eternal Happiness and Felicity.

Therefore the Goodness and Wisdom of God make it necessary that all Men should be provided in the Means necessary to obtain future and eternal Bliss.

Here we have the Strength of their Cause, and we shall therefore consider this Argument the more seriously, because some seem to be taken with it, and look upon it as having much Force. Before I offer any direct answer, I shall make some *general Reflections* on it. The *first Process* is only design'd to make Way for this *last*, which indeed is the Argument, and contains the Force of what is pleaded by the *Deists*.

Now concerning this Argument, we offer the few following Reflections, which will not a little weaken its Credit, and make it look suspicious-like.

I. That Proposition, whereon its whole Weight leans, *viz.* That the *Goodness* of God obliges him to provide his *Creatures* in the Means necessary for Attaining their Ends, is one of that Sort, anent which we may, in particular Cases and Applications of it, be as easily mistaken, and are as little in *Tuto*, to be positive in our Determinations, as any where else. For, albeit we are surer of nothing than that *God is Good*, and must act congruously to his *Goodness*, in general; yet when we come to make particular Inferences, and determine what, in Point of *Goodness* he is oblig'd to do, we are upon very slippery Ground, especially if we have not, as in this Case it is, the *Effects* to guide us. For, besides that *Goodness* is free in its *Effects*, and not affix'd to such *stated Rules*, knowable by us, as *Justice* is, *divine Goodness*, in its Actings, is under the Conduct and Management of *all-comprehending Wisdom*, which in every

Case wherein God is to Act, considers that a *Being* not only *infinitely Good* is to Act, but also *One* who is *infinitely Wise, Holy, Just and Righteous*; and therefore *all-comprehending Wisdom* takes *under Consideration*, or rather *has in its View* the Concernment of all those Properties of the *Divine Nature*; and withall, all the Circumstances belonging to each particular Case, and takes Care that the Case, in all its Circumstances, be so manag'd, that not *One* of the *divine Perfections* shine to the Eclipse of another: But that all of them appear with a suitable Lustre. Now, it is certain that we, who are of so narrow Understandings, and so many otherwise incapacitate to judge of the Ways of God, cannot reach either the different Interests of the *divine Properties*, and judge, in a particular circumstance Case, what befits a *God*, who is at once *Good, Holy, Wise and Righteous*; nor can we reach all that *infinite Variety* of Circumstances, which lying open to the *all-comprehending View* of *infinite and consummate Wisdom*, may make it appear quite otherwise to him, than to us. Hence, in Fact we see that an almost infinite Number of Things fall out in the Government of the World, which we know not how to reconcile to *divine Goodness*: And as many are left undone, which we would be apt to think *infinite Goodness* would make necessary to be done. This Consideration if well weighed, wou'd make Men very sparing, in determining any Thing necessary to be done, in Respect of *divine Goodness*, which either it is evident he has not done, or of which we are not sure that he has done it, which perhaps we shall make appear, if it is not, from what has been already said, evident to be the Case.

II. I observe as to what is subsum'd, *That Man is made capable of, & oblig'd in Duty to pursue eternal Felicity*; That albeit from *Revelation* we know this, as to Man in his *original Constitution* to be true, and by the *remaining Desires* of it we may guess that possibly it was so; yet if we set aside *divine Revelation*, and consider *Man* in his *present State*, concerning which the Question betwixt us and the *Deists* proceeds, we cannot by the help of *Nature's Light only*, with any Certainty conclude, *That Man is capable of, and oblig'd to pursue eternal Felicity*. We see the *Man* dissolv'd by *Death*. *Nature's Light* knows nothing of a *Resurrection*. Without a *Resurrection* there is nothing can be said for *Man's eternal Felicity*. Tho we grant his Soul to have no *Principle of Corruption* in it self, and so to be in this Sense, *Immortal*; yet this cannot secure us against the Fears of *Annihilation*: And the *Gusts and Desires of Felicity*, from which we many be induc'd to suspect some such State design'd

design'd for Man, being apparently frustrate, by the *Dissolution* of *Man*, to which they have a Respect, cannot but make Men, who have no more save *Nature's Light*, hesitate mightily about this Assertion; since it is plain; that the Desires we find in our selves of *Felicity*, do respect the *whole Man*; and the Aversion we have to *Dissolution* respects our Natures in their *present entire Frame and Constitution*: Besides it is of Moment, That if *Man*, now entire, is at a Loss how to judge of the *Ends* for which he was made, much more must he be suppos'd in a Strait how to judge, and determine for what *Ends*, any particular Part belonging to his *Constitution* was design'd after the *Dissolution* of the *whole* in a *separate State*, that is, in all its Concernments, so much *hid from and unknown to us*. Further, albeit undoubtedly, as long as we are, it is our Duty to make it our *chief Aim* to please God, and seek for *Felicity* only in him; yet since, not only our *Beings*, but that *Felicity*, which may be suppos'd attainable by us, are Emanations from *sovereign, free and undeserv'd Bounty*, without some Intimation from him, in Way of Promise, we can draw, no sure Conclusion, as to its Continuance, were we innocent, much less can we, being guilty.

III. This Argument concludes nothing in Favours of the *Deists*; whatever it may say for the *Heathens*. For were it granted, That God is oblig'd to provide all Men in the Means necessary to *future Felicity*; and that he has not given all Men any other Means; yet it cannot be hence inferr'd, That he has given no other Means to some. In this Case, if all this were granted, which yet we have not done, it would follow, That they, who have no other Means, must look on these as *sufficient*, and that they really are so: But still God is left at Liberty to prescribe other Dutys to any particular Persons, or Nations, by *Revelation*; and if this *Revelation* come, they are oblig'd, to whom it comes, to attend, receive and obey it. Now if the *Scriptures* be a *divine Revelation*, attended with sufficient Evidence, which the *Deists* must either allow, or overthrow what it pleads for it self; they are everlastingly undone, unless they receive it, and comply with it.

IV. I observe, That the *Conclusion* of this Argument, which it aims at the Establishment of, viz. *That God in Point of Goodness, must provide all Men in the Means necessary to future Felicity, and consequently has done it*, is exceedingly prejudic'd, by its lying cross to the plain Sense and Experience of the World in all Ages, as has been plainly made appear. Now in this Case, where the *Principles* or *Premisses* are dark, and such whereabout we may easily be mistaken, which is the Case here, as appears
by

y the *two first Reflections* : And the *Conclusion*, carries a manifest Contradiction to what we must certainly know, and have Experience of; in this Case we have Reason to conclude, That there lies certainly a Fallacy or Mistake in one or other of the *Principles*; tho' we cannot discover presently where it precisely is. And therefore, albeit Men could not easily except against the *Premisses* or *Principles*, whence it is deduc'd; yet they would think themselves sufficiently warranted, if not plainly to reject, yet to be shy in admitting the *Conclusion*: forasmuch as the admitting the *Conclusion* will oblige them to deny what their own Sense and Experience, as well as that of the World, assures them about : Whereas, it is much more reasonable to think and determine that there lies some Fallacy in the *Principles*, tho' it may be they are not in Case to detect it. No Man, by the Arguments against *Motion*, can be brought to question its *Being*, much less its *Possibility*; yet there are thousands, even no mean Scholars, who cannot answer the Arguments that conclude against it. But in very Deed, this Argument is not so strong, as to need so much Nicety.

Having thus far weakened it by these *general Reflections*, I shall next lay down and clear some *Propositions* that will lay a Foundation for a close Answer to it.

I. All Men, at present, are involv'd in *Guilt*, have *corrupt Inclinations*, and are under an *Inability* to yield *perfect Obedience* to the *Law*, they are subjected to. That all in more or less, are *guilty of Sin*, cannot be well deny'd, and we have heard the *Oracles of Reason* owning, *That all do err sometimes, even the best, in their Actions. That Men are corrupt*, or have *corrupt Inclinations*, has been above sufficiently evinc'd. That all are under some Sort of *Inability* to yield *perfect Obedience*, is attested by the Experience of all; and besides, is an inevitable Consequent of the Former: For it is not possible to suppose one possesse of *corrupt Inclinations*, and yet able to yield *perfect Obedience*. Nor need we stand to prove what the *Deists* own: For A. W. in his Letter to Charles Blount, speaking of the *Law of Nature*, says, *I don't say that we are able perfectly to obey it*. I dispute not now of what Sort this *Inability* is, whether only *moral*, such as arises from the *Will's Inclination to Evil*; or *natural*, which imports such an *Inability* as supposes the Nature of the *Faculties vitiate*, tho' the *Faculties* are not wanting. The *Condemnings* of our own Hearts, and the *Nature* of the *moral Government* we are under, sufficiently assures us, it is such as does not excuse from *Fault*; and further we are not concern'd: though, after all, I don't understand how the *Will* can be fix'd in an *Inclination to Evil*, or *Aversion* from *Good*, unless the

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Nature of the *Will* be supposed affected with some Indisposition, tho' the Faculty is not remov'd. But of this only by the By. It is enough to our present Purpose, that Man is *guilty, corrupt, and thence unable*. He that will deny this, must suppose us blind and senseless.

II. If *Reason* can ascertain of any Thing, it does of this, that Things were not *originally* thus with Man, or that Man, when he was first made, was not thus *guilty, corrupt or impotent*. None will dare to say, that at first he was *guilty*. And to assert him either *corrupt or impotent*, overthrows all the just Notions we have of the *Deity*. How can it be suppos'd, That *infinite Wisdom*, could enact *Laws*, which were not only not likely to take Effect, but really could not possibly be obey'd by Men subjected to them! How can we suppose *infinite Goodness* to establish *Laws* under a *Penalty*, and deny the *Powers*, which were indispensibly requisite to obey them, and without which it was not possible to evite the *Penalty*! How can we suppose *infinite Righteousness* and *Holiness* to consent to a Constitution of this Kind! How is it conceivable, that a God, Wise, Just and Good, should have *originally implanted* in our Natures *Inclinations* contrary to those *Laws*, that were the Transcript of, and bore the Impress of all these Perfections! Or, how can we once dream that he implanted *Inclinations*, which it was criminal to satisfy or comply with! For my Part, I see not what can be reasonably said in Answer to this.

III. It is further evident, That Man could not have fallen into this State he now is in, or from that wherein he was made, but by his own Default. If this is deny'd, I enquire, Where shall the Blame be lodg'd? will they lodge it at God's Door? Besides, that this is Blasphemy, it is further evident, that all the former Absurdities will recur: For it is to no Purpose to give *Powers*, and take them away again without any Default in the Person who loses them, the *Obligation to Obedience* or *Suffering* upon *Disobedience* still continuing. Nor can it be lodg'd upon any other, because if Man is without his own Fault, robb'd of the *Powers* necessary to obey the *Obligation to Obedience*, cannot be righteously continu'd. Nor was it consistent with the *divine Wisdom*, to have oblig'd Men to *Obedience*, under a *Penalty*, while there was a *Possibility* of Man's losing the *Power* to obey, without a Fault on his own Part. It remains then, That Man has by his own Fault forfeited what he has in this Part lost. And to this our own Conscience, and the Consciences of all Sinners, who are sensible of Sin, consent, That *God is free, and we guilty*.

IV. Hereon it inevitably follows, That Man is at present in a *corrupt sinful and impotent State*, into which by his own Default, he has fallen.

fallen. Nor see I how it is possible to evite this, which only fums up the three preceeding Assertions. The *first* whereof is undeniable with sober and ingenuous Persons, being attested by the plainest and clearest Experience, and the other *two* stand firm upon the clearest Deductions our Reason can make. If any *Deist* shall say, *How can this be that we are fallen into such a State?* I answer 1. The Question is not, *How can it be*, but *is it so?* I think I have said enough to clear it is so. 2. Hereby we may see *Natural Religion* has its Mysteries too, as well as *Reveal'd*. And I think I have told mo, than one of them. 3. If this will not satisfie, then get as much *Faith* and *Humility*, as will teach to subject to *supernatural Instruction*, and you may come to understand how it came to be so. If you will not, you must remain in the Dark, and there in no Help for it.

Now I have laid a plain Foundation for an Answer to this Argument, whereon the *Deists* value themselves so much. It was not because I thought so long an Answer needful for the Argument: But to make the Matter a little more plain, that we have Discours'd it at this Length.

The Argument then runs thus, *The Wisdom and Goodness of God make it necessary that all his Creatures should be provided in the Means necessary for attaining the End of their Being, and this holds especially as to the Rational: But Man was made capable of eternal Felicity, or this is the End of his Being.*

I need say nothing more to what is subsum'd, than has been said above. I answer to the *first Proposition*, be it allow'd that *God's Wisdom and Goodness* requir'd the *Rational Creature* should be provided in the *Means necessary* for the Attainment of the *End of his Being*, in his *first Make and original State*: Yet neither *God's Goodness*, nor his *Wisdom*, oblige him to *restore Man*, if by his own Fault, he has fallen from that *State*, wherein at first he was made. Now this is the Case with *Man* in his *present State*, as we have told above.

If it is said, This is but our Assertion, That *Man is in a laps'd State*. I answer 1. I think it is more than an Assertion, and must do so till I see what I have offer'd for Proof of the foregoing Propositions fairly answer'd. Nay till I see the whole Arguments that have heretofore been offer'd against the *Sufficiency of Natural Religion*, answer'd. For, I think they all prove that *Man* at present in a *laps'd State*. But 2. I add, That the *Deists* must mind, we are upon the *Defensive*, and it's theirs to prove, That *Man* in his present Condition is not so stated, as we

we say. It was *ex abundanti* for clearing of Truth, that I condescend to prove this. It was enough to me to have deny'd that Man is *now* in his *original State*, and put the Proof upon them; in Regard they affirm, and the whole Strefs and Force of their Argument leans upon that Supposition, which we deny.

The second Argument on which the *Deists* lay much Strefs, is drawn from the Suppos'd ill Consequences attending our Opinion. They pretend that it's *horribly cruel* to imagine, That all the *Heathen World* were lost. This they inculcate upon all Occasions, rather to expose their *Adversarys*, I am afraid, than to confirm the *Truth*. The Sum of this Argument we see propos'd by *Herbert* in his Words above quoted. Where he tells us, That all will own his Articles to

be good; *Ad Salutem tamen Aeternam comparandam, De Rel. Gentil. non sufficere prohibebunt nonnulli. Caterum, qui ita locutus fuerit, ne ille quidem audax; nedum scivum temerariumq; Effatum mea Sententiâ protulerit.* The Short of the Matter is, *If Natural Religion is not sufficient, we must give all the Heathen World for lost; but this is a cruel, and harsh Assertion, injurious to God, and cruel to such a vast Number of Men.* And here they raise a horrible Out-cry. With this they begin, and with this end.

This Argument, albeit it has no Force, as shall be evinc'd anon, yet makes such a Noise at a Distance, that a great many ingenuous Spirits seem to be mightily affected with it: I conceive therefore it will not be improper to lay open the Causes of this, and the rather because they discover where the Fallacy of the Argument lies, and whence it is that Men are so easily prepossess'd in this Matter. To this Purpose then it is to be observ'd,

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1. That there are some Things which in themselves are not desirable; to which therefore no *uncorrupted Rational Nature*, much less that of God, could incline *meerly upon their own Account*: Which yet, in some *circumstantiate Cases*, may be every Way congruous to *Justice* and *Righteousness*; yea, and worthy of the *Wise and Good God*: The Torment of any *Rational Creature* is not in, or for *it self* desirable: God has no Pleasure in it. The *Nature of Man*, if not deeply corrupted, yea, and divested of *Humanity*, recoils at it; yet there is none, who will not allow that in many *circumstantiate Cases*, it is not only worthy of, but plainly necessary in Point of *Wisdom* and *Justice*, for the most merciful of Men, to inflict upon their fellow Creatures such Punishments, as their own Natures do shrink at the Apprehensions of. Nor

can it be deny'd of the *Holy God*, notwithstanding of, and without Prejudice to his *infinite Goodness*, may, nay in some Cases must likewise thus punish his own Creatures. Now, if such Things are represented as they are, in their *own Natures*, without a due Consideration of *Circumstances* and *Ends* inducing to them, it is easy to make them appear not only *hard*, but *odious*.

II. However *just, righteous* and *congruous* such *Actions* are; yet he who undertakes to expose them as *cruel, barbarous* and *hard*, especially, if he has to do with Persons, weak, ignorant, partial in Favours of the Sufferer, and^r averse from the Author of the Torment, has a far more easy Task, even tho' he is of weaker Abilities, and imploy'd in Defence of the worst Cause, than he who undertakes to defend such Actions. The Reason of this is obvious; all that makes to his Purpose, who designs to expose the *Action* as *cruel*, lies open in its Nature and Horror to the Thoughts of the most inconsiderate; and if to this he only sets off the Representation with a little Art, so as to touch the Affections, which in this Case is easily done, he has carried his Point; the Judgement is not only deceiv'd, but the Affections are so deeply engag'd in the Quarrel, as to preclude the Light of the most nervous and valide Defence imaginable. Whereas on the other Hand, all Things are quite otherwise. The Circumstances inducing to such Actions, are usually deep, and not so easily discernable, and therefore not to be found out, without much Consideration; and when they are found out, they are not easily collected, laid together, and rang'd in that Order, which is necessary to set the Atrocity of the Crime in a due Light, especially where the Persons, who are to judge, are weak and byass'd. Besides, the Evil of those Crimes, being for most Part more Spiritual, makes not so strong an Impression on the Affections. And this Consideration holds more specially true, where the Question is concerning the *Judgments* of God, which proceed upon that comprehensive View, which *infinite Wisdom* has of all Circumstances, that accent the Evil, aggrege the Fault, and enhance the Guilt of Sins committed against him; many of which Circumstances no mortal Penetration can reach. And further, this more particularly holds true, where it is not God himself, but Man that pleads on Behalf of the Actings of God. It's very observable to this Purpose, That Historians of all Nations almost condescend upon Instances, wherein the Sight of severe, but just Punishment of atrocious Offenders, has not only excited the Compassion of the *Populace* or *Vulgar* to the *Sufferers*, but enrag'd them against the *Judges*, even they, who would have been ready

ready to reclaim against the *Partiality* and *Negligence* of the Judge, if the Crimes had been pass'd without just Punishment, when they see the Punishment inflicted through a fond Sort of Compassion to the Sufferers, complain of the Cruelty of the Judge, laying aside all Thoughts of the Atrocity of the Crime.

III. Where they, who make it their Business to traduce *such Actions*, as *hard* and *cruel*, and they also, whom they labour to perswade of this, are interest'd by Alliance, or common Interest in the Sufferers, are themselves in the same Condemnation, or, upon the same and such like Accounts, obnoxious to that Justice, which adjudges those Sufferers to these Torments, which they study to represent *cruel* and *barbarous*: It is no Wonder to see the Representation make such deep Impressions, and rivet such a Perswasion, That the Punishments are *cruel* and *hard*, as may not only byas a little against any Defence that can be made for the Judge, but as even may make them refuse to admit of any Apology, or condescend so far as to give any that can be made a fair Hearing. But all unbyass'd Persons must allow, that such can never be admitted Judges competent, as to what is just or unjust, hard or otherwise; the Case being, in Effect, their own, and they by this Means being made both Judge and Party.

IV. However great, terrible and heavy any Punishment God is suppos'd to inflict, may in its own Nature appear, or how great soever the Number of the Sufferers may be, yet we can never, from the Severity of the Punishment, or the Number of the Sufferers disprove its Justice; unless we can make it appear, That no Circumstances, which can possibly fall under the Reach of *Infinite Wisdom*, can render such Severity towards so many Persons, worthy of him. Now, however easy this Undertaking may appear to Persons less considerate, it will have a far other Aspect to such as impartially ponder, that all Men are manifestly partial in Favours of those of their own Race, and in a Case which is, or may be their own, and have no suitable Apprehensions of the Concernment of the *divine Glory* in it, or no due Regard for them: Besides, such is their Shallowness, that they can neither have under View many important Circumstances, that are fully expos'd to *All-comprehending Wisdom*, nor can they fully understand the Weight, even of these Circumstances, they either do, or may, in some Measure know.

V. Every Man, who is wise and just, when either he hears of, or sees any Punishment that appears very severe and terrible, must suspend his Judgment as to the Hardship of it, till the Author of it is fully heard

as to the Inducements, and neither ought he deny what his Eyes see, his Ears hear, or he is otherwise inform'd of, upon sufficient Evidences. He is neither to question the *Matter of Fact*, nor condemn the Judge of *Cruelty*, because of the *seeming Severity* of the *Punishment*. This is a Piece of common Justice, which every Judge, even amongst Men, may reasonably claim from his fellow Creatures, albeit his Actions and the Reasons of them, cannot be suppos'd to ly so far out of their Ken, as those of the *divine Judgments*: Much more is it reasonable for Men to pay this Deference to God, considering how unable the most elevated Capacities are to penetrate into all the Reasons, which an *Infinitely Wise God* may have under View; and there is the more Reason for this, since Man also is naturally so very apt to be partial in his own Favours, and fail of giving a due Regard in his Thoughts unto the Concernments of *divine Glory*.

These Observations, as they are in themselves unquestionably true, so they do fully lay open the Causes of that general Acceptance, which this Plea of the *Deists* has obtain'd with less attentive Minds; and how little Weight is to be laid upon them. In Word, if they are well considered, they are sufficient to enervate the Force of this whole Plea.

But least the *Deists* should think their Argument slighted, or that Conscience of our own Weakness, makes us choose long Weapons to fight with, I shall closely consider the Argument. Perhaps what makes a Noise, at a Distance, will be less frightful if we take a nearer View of it. We deny that the *Heathen World* had *Means sufficient for obtaining Eternal Happiness*. The *Deists* say, This is cruel and rash. Let us now see whence this may be proven.

I. Doth *our Cruelty* lie in this, That we have laid down an Assertion, upon which it follows, That in Fact *all the Heathen World are lost*? But now do not the *Deists* own, That in very Deed, *all impenitent Sinners must perish*? No Doubt they do, who talk so much of the *Necessity of Repentance*. Well, are not all who want *Revelation*, guilty of gross Sins? Is not *Idolatry* a *gross Sin*? are they not all plung'd in the *Guilt* of it? *Socrates*, the most considerable Person for his *Vertue*, that liv'd before Christ, cannot be excus'd. He deny'd his Disowning the *Gods of Athens*. He join'd in their *Worship*. If this was against his Conscience, the more was his Fault, and, even with his dying Breath, he order'd a Cock to be sacrificed to *Esculapins*. *Epictetus*, the best perhaps among the *Philosophers* who liv'd after Christ, in his *Enchiridion* enjoins to worship after the Mode of

of the Country where we live; and no Doubt practis'd as he taught Gentlemen, condescend, if ye can, upon one, who was not guilty of gross Sins. Did they repent? What Evidence bring you of it? That the Multitude liv'd and dy'd *impenitent*, none dare question. That there was one *penitent*, none can prove. That the best of them were guilty of gross Sins cannot be deny'd, and there is no Evidence of their *Repentance*. Yea, there is no Reason to think that they look'd upon *Repentance* as a *Vertue*; but much to the Contrary. Well, Gentlemen, don't your own *Principles* conclude, That the Bulk of the *Heathen World* are, in Fact inevitably lost? And that there is but little Ground of Hope, and great Reason to fear, That it far'd not much better with the few *Virtuosi*?

II. But doth the *Cruelty* ly in the *Number* of the Persons suppos'd to be lost? No. This cannot be said. For if the Cause be sufficient, the Number of the Condemn'd makes not the Condemnation the more cruel. Besides, let them go as narrowly to Work as they can, they are few, very few, for whom they can plead Exemption: And their Pleas for that Handful will be very lame. So that for any Thing I see, the *Deists*, in this Respect, are not like to be much more merciful than we.

III. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we suppose them condemn'd *without a Cause*, or without one that is *sufficient*. But this we do not, we suppose none to be condemn'd, who are not *Sinners against God*, and *Transgressors of a Law* stamp'd with his *Authority*, which they had Access to know. And were not the best of them guilty of gross Sins? What evidence have we of their *Repentance*? Is it not just, ev'n according to the *Deists Principles*, to condemn *impenitent Sinners*? Thus we suppose none condemn'd, but for their *Sins*.

IV. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we suppose them all equally *miserable*, *Socrates* to be in no better Case than *Nero*. But this follows not upon our Assertion. None are suppos'd miserable beyond the just Demerit of their Sins.

V. Well, perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we suppose their *Torments* after this Life, to be intense in *Degree*, or of a longer Continuance than their *Sins deserve*. This we are sure of, that their *Sins* being *Offences* against God, deserve a deeper Punishment, than some Men can well think of; and that God is just, and will proportion *Punishments* exactly to *Offences*, and have a just Regard, as well to the *real Alleviations* as *Aggravations* of every Sin. And if God has, in his Word, determin'd
that

that every Sin committed against him, deserves *eternal Punishment*, no Doubt his *Judgment is according to Truth*. We are not Judges in the Case.

VI. Well, but the Rashness and Cruelty perhaps lies here, That by our Assertion we are oblig'd to pass a *positive* and *peremptory Judgment* about the *eternal State* of all the *Heathen World*, That they are gone to *Hell*, and laid under *everlasting Punishments*, leaving no Room for the *Mercy* of God. But to this we say, Revelation has taught us, ev'n where there is the justest Ground of Fear, to speak *modestly* of the *eternal Condition* of others, and to leave the Judgment concerning this to the *righteous God*, to whom alone it belongs, and who will *do no Iniquity*. That all the *Heathen World* deserve *Punishment* cannot, without Impudence, be deny'd. That God will pass any of them without inflicting the Punishment they deserve, neither *Revelation* nor *Reason* give us any Ground to think. That none of them shall be punished *beyond their Deservings*, *Scripture* and *Reason* demonstrate. But in these Things our Assertion of the *Insufficiency of Natural Religion* is not concern'd. It obliges us to pass no Judgment further than this, "That the Heathens, and all who want Revelation, had
" no Means sufficient to bring them to eternal Happiness, and that
" consequently they had no Reason to expect it; and we have no Reason to conclude them possess'd of it. And in this Case we leave them to be dispos'd of, as to their State, after this Life, by the *Wisdom* and *Justice* of God.

VII. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That they are suppos'd to want the *Means necessary* to attain *eternal Happiness*, while yet they are capable of, and expos'd to *eternal Misery* for their Sins. But 1. How will the *Deists* prove, That God, without a *Promise*, is oblig'd to give Man *eternal Happiness* for his *Obedience*? 2. Since none of them are to be punish'd beyond the just Demerit of their Sins, may not God righteously inflict that Punishment, what ever it is, their Sins, in strict Justice, deserve, tho he had never propos'd a *Reward*, which Reason can never prove our *best Actions* worthy of, even tho' we had continu'd innocent? But 3. That Man, in his present Case, has dropt the Knowledge of *eternal Felicity*, and the Means of attaining it, and is unable to attain it, is owing not to any Defect of *Bounty* and *Goodness* of God, much less of *Justice*; but only unto the *Sin* of Man, as has been demonstrate in our Answer to the foregoing Argument, by Reasons drawn from *Nature's Light*. Notwithstanding of which, it must still be
own'd,

own'd, That *Nature's Light* cannot acquaint us, how Man fell into his present lamentable Condition, as we have above made appear.

VIII. But is it not safer and more modest, may some say, to suppose, That God of his great *Mercy* did, by *Revelation*, communicate to some of the best of the *Heathens*, who improv'd *Nature's Light* to the greatest Advantage, what was further necessary to their *Salvation*, or, at least, to bring them into a State of *Happiness*, of somewhat inferior Degree to that which is prepar'd for *Christians*. I know many *Christian Writers* of old and of late have multiply'd Hypotheses of this Kind: Some have suppos'd *Apparitions of Angels, Saints*, nay damn'd Souls and Devils; of which Stories I am told that *Collius* Discourses at

large in the second Book of his Treatise *De Animabus Paganorum*. Some tell us, "That to such of them

De cœlesti Hierar. Ch. 9.

"as liv'd vertuously, God always at some Time or

"other sent some Man or Angel savingly to illu-

"minate them. So the *Areopagites*; some tell us

Strom. Lib. 6.

of *Christ's* Preaching to them in *Purgatory*, so *Clemens*

Alexandrinus; some will have them instructed by the *Sibyllæ*, as the same

Author elsewhere; some talk of their Commerce with the *Jews*, in

which Way no Doubt some of them came to saving Acquaintance with

God; others say, That upon their worthy Improvement of their *Naturals*

God might and did reveal *Christ* to them and *Spirituals*, because *habenti*

dabitur, so *Arminius*; and of this *Herbert* frequently intimates his Ap-

probation, but with an evident Contradiction to, and Subversion of his

whole Story about the Sufficiency of *Natural Religion*. Besides, the Bot-

tom of this is a rotten *Pelagian* Supposition of a *Merit* in their good

Works: And that *habenti dabitur*, spoken of in another Case, after all

the Pains some are at to stretch it, will not reach this Case: And after

all we are left in the Dark, as to the Way wherein they will have Su-

pernatural communicate to them. The late ingeni-

ous Author of the *Conference with a Theist*, supposes a

Nichol. Confer. Part. 2. P. 80.

Place provided for the sober Pagans in another World,

wherein they shall enjoy a considerable Happiness, and

wrests what our LORD says to his Disciples, *Joh. 14. 3.* of the many

Mansions that are in his Father's House, to favour his Notion. But now

as to all these Suppositions and others of the same Alloy, however

their Authors may please themselves in them, I think they are to be re-

jected. Nor is this from any Defect of Charity to the *Heathens*, but be-

cause they are supported by no Foundation, either in *Scripture* or *Rea-*

son,

son. However some of them are possible, yet generally speaking, none of them have the Countenance so much as of a probable Argument. The Scripture Proof, adduc'd by that last mention'd ingenious Author, has no Weight in it. There is no Countenance given to it from the Context, nor any other Place of Scripture, and I cannot approve of his Boldness in stretching our Lord's Words beyond what his Scope requires. But these Things have been consider'd at

length by others, whom the Reader may consult. See Anth. Tuckney *Appen. to his Ser. on Act 4. 12.* All these Suppositions are at best but ingenious Fancies, wherewith their Authors may please themselves, but can never satisfy others. Nor can they

be of any Advantage to the *Heathens*. I think I have made it sufficiently appear in the foregoing Discourse, That they wanted *Means sufficient* to lead them to *Salvation*, and so had no Ground to support a reasonable Hope of it. It is granted ev'n by those, whose peculiar Hypotheses in Divinity, lead them to be most favourable to the *Heathens*, That they had no federal Certainty of *Salvation*; and for any uncovenanted *Mercy*, of which some talk, I know nothing about it. *Scripture* is silent. *Reason* can determine nothing in it; and therefore Disputes about it are to be weav'd. It's unwarrantable Curiosity for Men to pry into the Secrets of God; *Things that are reveal'd do belong to us*. Where *Revelation* stops, we are to stop. Ev'n *Herbert* himself dare carry the Matter no farther than a *May be*; and what may be, may not be.

CHAP. XIX.

Wherein Herbert's Reasons for Publishing his Books in Defence of Deism are examin'd and found weak.

THE learn'd *Herbert*, toward the Close of his Book *De Religione Laici*, to justify the Publication of his Thoughts, as to a *catholick Religion*, common to all Mankind, mentions seven suppos'd Advantages of this Opinion, or so many Pleas for *Deism*. What Weight there is in them, we shall now consider.

He

He introduces himself with a Protestation that he publish'd not his Book with any ill Design against *Christianity*, which he honours with the Title of *optima Religio*: But on the Contray says, That he aim'd at Establishing it, and intended to strengthen true Faith, "Denique me Animo *Herbert Relig. Laici*, P. 28.

"adeo non *optima Religioni* insensu, aut a *vera*

"*Fide* alieno Tractatum hunc edidisse testor; ut utramque statuminare in Animo habuerim, &c.

I shall not dive into his Designs; for which he has long ago accounted unto the only competent Judge. But of the Design, or rather Tendency of his Books, we may safely Judge. And as to this I say, That if it is granted, that the *Scriptures* are the only Standard of the *Christian Religion*, which cannot modestly be deny'd; I shall upon this Supposition undertake to maintain against any who will defend him, That his Books aim at the utter Subversion of the *Christian Religion*, that his *Principles* overthrow entirely the *Authority* of the *Scriptures*, and are not only inconsistent with, but destructive to the *Essentials* of *Christianity*. And I further add, That this is every where so obvious in his Writings, that it will require a strange Stretch of Charity, to believe our Author cou'd be Ignorant of it.

Our Author having told us what was not his Design, proceeds next to condescend upon the *Reasons* inducing him to assert this *Common Religion*. And

I. He tells us that he maintains this *Common Religion*, "Quod providentiam divinam, &c. Because it vindicates the *universal Providence* of God, God's Principal Attribute, whose Dignity can never be sufficiently supported. Neither do any *particular Religion*, or *Faith* (to give you our Author's own Words, *Fides quantumvis laxa*) maintain this, so as to represent God's Care of all Mankind, in providing for them such *Common Principles* as those contain'd in our *catholick Truths*.

Here our Author teaches two Things, and I think them both False. (1) He tells us, That his *catholick Religion* vindicates the *universal Providence* of God, or serves to maintain its Honour. This I think False. The Foundation of it we have prov'd to be not only precarious, but false. For we have clear'd, That his *five Articles* did not *universally obtain*; and further, that if they had, they were not sufficient to *Happiness*. Yea our Author himself, after he has told us, That the *universal Providence* of God cannot be maintain'd, unless we suppose

him to have provided all his Creatures, in the *Means necessary* for obtaining their *Happiness*, next informs us that
De Rel. Laici, P. 1, 4. he has provided Man in no other *Means*, save these *five Articles*. And he further tells us in
De Rel. Gentil. P. 217. his Words above quoted, That he dare not *positively* say they are *Sufficient*, nor can we be sure of it, since it depends upon God's secret Judgments, which we cannot certainly know. And we have heard *Blount* above
Orac. of Reas. P. 87. own, That *Deism* is not safe, unless it be piec'd out by some Help from *Christianity*. Well, is this the Way our Author asserts the *Honour* of *Divine universal Providence*, first to tell us, That its *Honour* cannot be maintain'd without supposing a *sufficient Religion* universally to have obtain'd, and then to tell us that he is not sure, that ever there was such a *Religion*? Is not this the plain Way to bring the *universal Providence* of God in Question?

Again 2ly, Our Author teaches, That no particular Religion can support the *Honour* of *universal Providence*. This I take to be also false. The *Christian Religion* asserts and proves, That God, who has created all Things, preserves them, and governs them in a Way suitable to their Nature and Circumstances, and in so far clears the Equity of God's Proceedings with the *Heathen World*; in particular, as may satisfy sober Men. It acquaints us, That God did, at first, provide Man in a *Covenant Security* for *eternal Happiness*, and in *Means sufficient* for obtaining of it; that Man, by his own Fault, incapacitate himself for the Use of these Means, and forfeit the Advantage of the *Covenant Security*; that God, in Justice, hath left the *Heathen World* under the Disadvantage of that Forfeiture; that during the Time he sees meet to spare them, he governs them, in such a Way as is suitable to their lapsed State, of which we have spoke before. We confess we are not able to explain all the hard Chapters in the *Book of Providence*, and solve every difficulty relating thereto; but this affords no Ground for the Denial either of God's *General* or *Special Providence*. As the Difficulties about God's *Omniscience*, *Omnipresence*, *Eternity*, &c. will not justify a Denial of these *Attributes*, or the *Existence* of a *Deity* vested with them; so neither will the Difficulties about *Providence* justify a Refusal of it; and if this Vindication of *Providence* fail of giving Satisfaction, I am sure *Herbert's* will never satisfy.

What our Author adds about his *Fides quantumvis laxa*, which he supposes some to stand up for, and maintain as a *sufficient Religion*, I do not

not well understand. But yet since this Expression is very oft us'd in the Writings of this Author, in Reproach of *particular Religions*, especially the *Christian*, which lays the greatest Stress upon *Faith*, it cannot be pass'd without some Remark. That which our Author seems to intend by this *Fides quantumvis laxa*, or *Faith how lax so ever it be*, is a *Faith* that consists in a general Assent to the Truth of the Doctrines, without any correspondent Influence upon Practice. And he would bear us in hand that the *Christian Religion*, or, at least, *Christians*, do reckon this Sufficient to Salvation. This is a base and disingenuous Calumny. And our Author could not but know it to be such, if he was acquaint either with the *Scriptures* or the *Writings* and *Lives* of that Set of *Christians* against whom this Calumny is particularly level'd, who unanimously teach, That the Faith that's available is that which works by Love, and is to be found only in them, who are created in Christ Jesus to good Works. If Herbert was a Stranger to the one or the other, he was the unmeetest Person in the World to set up for a Judge and Censurer of them.

II. The next Advantage that Herbert condescends on, of his *catholick Religion*, is, "Quod probam Facultatum Homini infitarum Conformationem, Usunque doceat. Herbert *Rel. Laici*,
 "Nulla enim datur Veritas catholica, quæ non P. 28.
 "in Foro interno describitur, vel non illuc sal-
 "tem necessariò reducitur. That is, *This alone teaches Man the due Use and Application of his Faculties*. But this is only our Author's Assertion. *Christianity* is no less consistent with the due Use of our Faculties and their Application to their proper Objects, than our Author's Religion. It destroys none of them, lays none of them aside, and violents none of them; but restores, improves and elevates them to their most noble and proper Use.

Our Author adds, for a Confirmation of his Assertion, *That there is no catholick Verity, but what either is inscrib'd in the Mind, or what may be reduc'd to some innate Truth*. Whether there is any *Verity* inscrib'd in the Mind in our Author's Sense, I question. Mr. Lock has proven, That there is none such, and in particular has evinc'd that our Author's five *Lock Essay of hum.*
Articles are not *innate Truths*, no not according to *Underf. Book 1. Ch. 3.*
 the Description he himself gives of such *Notices*. §. 15, 16, 17, 18,
 19.
 He examines the Characters of *innate Truth* given by our Author, and undertakes to shew them not applicable to his five *Articles*.

III. Our Author tells he embrac'd this *catholick Religion, quod Incontroverſa a Controversis diſtinguat*, &c. Its needleſs to repeat all our Author's Words here. What he ſays is in ſhort this, That *particular Religion* (and here he muſt be underſtood to ſpeak particularly of *Chriſtianity*) *contain aſtere and frightful Doctrines that prejudice ſome Men of ſqueemiſh Stomacks at all Religion* (and it is to be wonder'd at, That Men, who have no Heart to any Religion, are diſguſted eaſily?) But our Author has provided them of *one* that will not offend the moſt nice and delicate Palate, as conſiſting of *Principles univerſally agreed to*; which he ſuppoſes ſuch Perſons will readily cloſe with, and ſo retain *ſome Religion*, whereas otherwiſe they would have *none*.

Here our Author evidently deſigns a Thrufi at the *Chriſtian Religion*, & inſinuates, That it is ſtuffed with *aſtere and horrid Doctrines*. I know full well what are the Doctrines he particularly aims at: The Doctrines concerning the *Corruption of Man's Nature, the Decrees of God, the Satisfaction of Chriſt* are particularly intended. But if theſe Doctrines are conſider'd as deliver'd in the *Scriptures*, or taught by *Chriſtians*, according to the *Scriptures*, what is there *offenſive* in them? what *horrid* or *frightful*?

I do indeed grant, That ſome *Chriſtians*, through their *Weakneſs without any ill Deſign*, have ſo repreſented, or rather miſ-repreſented ſome of theſe Points, particularly concerning the *Decrees of God*, as to give Offence to ſober Perſons of all Perſwaſions. But as to this, they, and they only are to bear the Blame. As for the *Doctrines, what have they done?* Muſt the Fault of the *Profeſſors* be caſt on the *Religion* they profeſs? This no reaſonable Man will allow to be juſt.

I do likewiſe acknowledge, that whereas there are different Sentiments among *Chriſtians* concerning ſome of theſe Points; and ſome of the contending Parties have ſo unfairly ſtated, and foully miſ-repreſented the Opinions of their Oppoſers, in the Diſguiſe of imaginary Conſequences, or Conſequences, at leaſt, deny'd and abhorr'd by the Maintainers of the Opinions they oppoſe, as to give ſome Umbrage to this, ſtartle weak Men, and prejudice them againſt *Religion*. This they do to expoſe their Adverſaries, and fright others from the Reception of their Sentiments. For ſuch I can make no Excuse. The Practice it ſelf is ſcandalouſly Diſingenuous, and can admit of no reaſonable Vindication, and ſo fair an Occaſion being given, I cannot paſs it without a Remark. A notable Inſtance of this Sort I meet with in a Book, juſt now come to Hand. The ingenious Author of the

ſhort

short Method with the Deists, in a Letter directed to *Charles Gildon*, newly recover'd from *Deism*, cautions him against the *Dissenters*; and to enforce his Caution, presents him with such an Account of their Opinions, as is indeed suited to fright the Reader.

He tells him that they maintain, " That God sees *Letter subjoin'd*

" no Sin in the Elect, let them live never so wicked- *to the Deists Manual, P. 22, 33.*

" ly. They damn the far greatest Part of the World,

" by irreversibile Decrees of Reprobation, and say,

" That their good Works are hateful to God; and that it is not pos-

" sibly in their Power to be fav'd, let them believe as they will, and

" live never so religiously: They take away free Will in Man, and

" make him a perfect Machine. They make God the Author of Sin,

" to creat Men on purpose to damn them; ----- They make his

" Promises and Threatnings to be of no Effect, nay, to be a Sort of

" burlesquing, and insulting those whom he has made miserable,

" which is an hideous Blasphemy. But to what Purpose is all this said?

1. Did not the Writer know, That this is not a Representation at all

of the Opinions maintain'd by the *Dissenters*, but of the Consequences

tack'd to them by their Adversaries? Does he not know, That they

detaste and abhor *these Positions* as much as he does, That they

refuse these to be Consequences of them? Is it then cadid to offer

that as their Opinions, which they abhor, and which they will not al-

low to follow upon their Opinion? Again 2. Doth not this

Gentleman know that the *Principles* to which he has tack'd

these Consequences, are the *very Doctrines*, taught in the *Articles of the*

Church of England, unanimously maintain'd by all the great Men of

that Church, till Bp. *Lawd* his Days; which were preach'd by them in

the Pulpit, taught in the Schools, and upon all Occasions avouch'd as

the Doctrine of the *Church of England*; and, as such, to this very Day

are own'd by no inconsiderable Number of that Church? With what

Justice then or Ingenuity can he call this the *Doctrine* of the *Dissenters*?

3. From whom does he expect Credit to this disingenuous Account of

the *Dissenters* Opinion? Such as know them, will believe nothing upon

the Reading of this Passage; but that *the Writer* either understood not

the Opinions he undertook to represent, or that against his Light, he

misrepresented them, and so is never to be credited again, without

good Proof, in any Thing he says of them. 4. Was it the Author's

Design to gain a Prosylite to the opposite Opinions? This I believe

was it. But this is the most unlucky Way of Management in the

World; for if his Disciple is a Man of Sense, he will be shy of believ-

ing

ing that such monstrous Opinions can be receiv'd by a *Body of Men*, among whom, there must be own'd by their worst Enemies, to be not a few learn'd and sober. and if he find himself abus'd upon Search, may he not be tempted, not only to reject this Account, but all that he receiv'd upon the same Authority? When Persons of Sense, who have been abus'd, are undeceiv'd, they are wont ever after to incline to favourable Thoughts of the Persons and Principles they were prejudg'd against; and to suspect that Cause of Weakness, which cannot be supported, but by such mean and unmanly Shifts, as this of misrepresenting the opposite Opinion. 5. If the adverse Party shall take the same Course, what a fine Work shall we have? and to speak modestly, they want not a colourable Pretence for a Retortion. But who shall be the Gainers? Neither of the contending Parties surely: For Men will never be beat from their Opinions by Calumnies that they know to be unjust. None will gain, save they, who are lying at the Catch, for Pretences to countenance them in the Rejection of the *Christian Religion*. It's none of my Business to debate this Controversie with this Author.

If he has any Thing new to advance upon these Heads, let him advance it, he will find *Antagonists* in the *Church of England*, able perhaps to tope with him, tho the *Dissenters* should fail: This Gentleman had manag'd his Opposition with more modesty and Ingenuity, if he had attentively perus'd the learn'd Bp. of *Sarum* his *Discourse* on the 17th *Article* of the *Church of England*. But I hope this Author, upon second Thoughts, when his Passion is over, will be asham'd of what he has writ.

But now to return to *Herbert* and the *Deists*, If we abstract from these two Abuses, and consider the *Doctrines of Christianity* as represented in the *Scriptures*, or according to them, there is no Ground to charge them with any Thing frightful, or of ill Consequence to *Religion*. Yea I dare be so bold as to say, That if *practical Religion* consisting in *Godliness*, *Righteousness* and *Sobriety*, is any where to be found in the World, it is to be found amongst those, as readily as any where else, and in as eminent a Degree, who have been train'd up in the Belief, and under the Influence of those very Doctrines, which some, and particularly *Herbert* would perswade us to be so horrid, as to fright Men at once out of their *Wits* and *Religion*. If it be said, That this is not owing to the *Influence* of these Principles. I answer, This, at least, proves these Principles not inconsistent with *practical Religion*, in as much as they, who believe them, are eminent in it; and, if we enquire of them, what has influenc'd their

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their Walk, they are ready to attest, That the *Belief* of these very Truths has had the *principal Influence* upon that Effect; and to offer a rational Account of the Tendency of these Doctrines to promote *practical Religion*.

Now, we have wip'd off the insinuated Reproach, design'd by our Author, against the *Christian Religion*. Let us next consider what there is in this Plea. He tells us, *His Religion* consists of *incontroverted Articles*, and so will fright no Body. But 1. This is not true in Fact, as we have demonstrate above. *His Articles* have been *controverted*. The *Sufficiency* of them has been *believ'd* by *very few*. Again 2. Will our Author say, That nothing is *necessary*, to *Religion*, which is *controverted*? Will the *Deists* undertake this Point? If so, their *Religion* is *lost*, as is evident from what has been demonstrated above. 3. This no more proves our Author's *five Articles* to be a *sufficient Religion*, than it proves *one* of them alone to be *such*. He who owns no more in *Religion*, but this only, *There is a God*, may as well plead, That *Religion* retains only what is incontrovertible. But the *Deists* will say, There are other Points *necessary*. Well does not this give me an Answer to their Argument, when I say, There are other Points necessary besides their *five Articles*. 4. Whereas he would bear us in hand, That no Man will scruple his *Religion*, is not this enough to make any reasonable Man shy of admitting it, that its Author and Inventa dare not say *positively*, That it's *sufficient* to answer the Purpose, for which it is design'd, and that others undertake to demonstrate, That if it is trusted to, it will prove a Soul-ruining Cheat? In a Word, it's not worth the While to calculate a *Religion* for those, who will admit nothing in *Religion*, but what is *incontroverted*: For, in short, they are for *no Religion*. And I think we have in particular evict'd, That our Author's *five Articles* will be too hard in Digestion for such delicate Stomachs.

IV. Our Author tells us, He embrac'd this *Catholick Religion*, *Quod Concordia communis Substructionem agat, &c.* That is in short, let all the World agree to the *Sufficiency* of our Author's *five Articles*, and leave all other Things to be rejected or receiv'd, as Trifles, not necessary to be disputed about, and then there is an End of all the Contests, then there's a Foundation laid for everlasting Peace, and the Golden Age will be retri'd, *Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna.*

This Trifle deserves rather Pity than an Answer. What, will all the World agree that this *Religion* is *sufficient*, while its Inventa durst not say so?

V. He

V. He embrac'd it, "*Quod Authoritatem Majestatemq; indubiam Religioni, et Hierarchia inde Politiaque conciliat, &c.* That is, *because it conciliates Respect to Religion, to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and civil Government.* Religion will be respected, when it requires nothing but what is necessary. Church and State will be respected when it punishes nothing but Transgressions against *incontroverted Articles.*

But is not this to trifle with a Witness? The Weakness of this Plea is so obvious, that I may well spare my pains in exposing it. Will it maintain the *Dignity of Religion* to confine it to a *Number of Articles*, which for any Thing we know, or the *Deists* know, may cheat us of our *Reward* in the End, since they cannot positively assure us of its *Sufficiency*, and we are positively sure it is not *sufficient*? Will it maintain the *Honour of Church Officers*, to admit a *Religion*, which subverts the very Foundation of all Respect to them, *viz.* The *divine Institution* of their Order? As for the Advantage of it to the *civil Government*, the *Deists* may offer it to the Consideration of the next Parliament, and they will consider whether it is proper to conciliate Respect to the *civil Government.*

VI. Our Author embrac'd his *Religion*, "*Quod adeo non moliat Religionem, ut ejus Severitatem Stimulum addat.* That is, *It is so from favouring Liberty in Sin, that it urges harder to Vertue, severe Vertue, than Reveal'd Religion.* There is no Hope of Pardon here upon the Satisfaction of another. Men must work for their Life, and when they fail, they must satisfy by their *Repentance.*

Well, but do they, who teach the *Necessity of Satisfaction*, exclude *Repentance*? And if they make both *Satisfaction* and *Repentance* absolutely necessary, tho' each in its own Order and Place, to *Forgiveness*, methinks they will yet have the Advantage in Point of *Severity.* Again, but what if *Repentance* will not satisfy? If this is so, and our Author seclude all other *Satisfaction*, will not his *Religion* lead Men rather to *Despair* than *Vertue.*

VII. Our Author's last Inducement was, *Quod sacrarum Literarum Fini ultimo Intentioniq; quadret, &c.* That is, "*Because this catholick Religion answers the ultimate Design of the Scriptures. All the Doctrines taught there level at the Establishment of these five catholick Verities as we have oft hinted; there is Sacrament, Rite or Ceremony, there enjoyn'd, but what aims (or seems to aim) at the Establishment of these five Articles.*

But is not this a notable Jest. Our Author wou'd bear us in Hand,
That

That his *Religion* answers the *great End* of the *Scriptures*, better than that *Religion*, which the *Scriptures* themselves teach. If our Author says not this, he says nothing. If the *End* of the *Scriptures* is not *good*, it is not for the Honour of our Author's *Religion* that it agrees with it: If it is *good*, and the *Religion* taught in the *Scriptures* themselves, answer their own Design best, why then, I would chuse that *Religion*, and leave our Author to enjoy his own: If he says, *His* answers it better, then I would desire to know where the Complement lies, that he design'd to the *Scriptures*. But I desire to know further of the *Deists*, Whether do the *Scriptures* teach any Thing besides these *Articles*, to be necessary? Where do the *Scriptures* tell that these are *sufficient*? Are *divine Institutions*, *Sacraments*, &c. necessary toward the Compassing of the Ends of *Religion*? If they are not, how does it commend our Author's *Religion*, that it quadrates with the Design of these *Institutions*? If they are necessary and useful, this *catholick Religion* is at a Loss that wants them. I am sensible our Author has caution'd against this, when he tells us, That they either do, or seem to aim at this. I see *old Birds are not caught with Chaff*. Now I found it. This *catholick Religion*, will really serve the Purpose, that *reveal'd Truths*, and *Institutions* do only seem to aim at. But after all, this is but *Say* and not *Proof*. And I will undertake to evict against all the *Deists* under Heaven, That the Confinement of *Religion* to these *five Articles*, as taught by the *Light of Nature*, is not only not *compliant* with the *principal Intendment* of the *Scriptures*, but inconsistent with it.

Thus I have considered the Inducements which led *Herbert* to imbrace this *catholick Religion*, and found them wanting. And I must say, If this noble Author had not been straitned by a bad Cause, that's not capable of a rational Defence, his Learning, which was very considerable, cou'd not but have afforded him better Pleas. *Charles Blount*, in the Close of his *Religio Laici*, tells us, It was for the same Reasons he imbrac'd *Deism*, and copies after *Herbert* with some little Variety. What he has, that our Author has taken no Notice of, in this Place, will occur in the next Chapter, where they are again repeated under another Form. *Men that have little to say have need to husband it well, and make all the Improvement of it they can.*

C H A P. XX.

*Wherein the Queries offer'd by Herbert and Blount, for proving
the Sufficiency of their five Articles are examin'd.*

TH E learn'd *Herbert* in an *Appendix* to his *Religio Laici*, moves some Objections against himself, but fearing after he has said all he can, some may remain unsatisfied still, he betakes himself to another Course, and essays to dispute his Opposers into a Compliance with his Sentiments by *Queries*. Of this Sort he proposes *seven*. *Charles Blount* concludes his *Religio Laici* in the same Method, with this Difference, That he has added other *seven Queries*, making in all *fourteen*, and prefix'd this Title, *Queries proving the Validity of the five Articles*.

The Arguments couch'd in these *Queries*, in so far as they tend to evict the *Sufficiency* of this *catholick Religion*, are not new, but materially the same, which we have formerly consider'd. The Method is indeed different, more subtle, and better suited to their great Design. Direct Proofs are less deceiving, and their Weakness is more easily discoverable by vulgar Capacities. *Queries* conceal the *Weakness* of Arguments, in tangle, perplex and amuse less attentive Minds; and by them, the subtle Asserters of a bad Cause ease themselves of the Trouble of proving their ill grounded Assertions, which yet, by all Rules of Disputing, belongs to them only, and turn it over upon the *Defender*. This is enough as to the Method, to let us see how suitable it was to their Purpose.

The *Queries* propos'd by *Blount* are the same with *Herbert's*, and he adds others which *Herbert* wants. Wherefore we shall consider them as propos'd by Mr. *Blount*. But whereas some of them are to more Advantage urg'd by *Herbert*, we shall offer these in *Herbert's* Words, that we may overlook nothing, which has the least Appearance of Force in this Cause.

Query I. " Whether there can be any other true God, or whether
" any

" any other can justly be call'd *Optimus Maximus*, the Herbert's Relig.
 " greatest and best God, and common Father of Man- Laici, Appen. P.
 " kind, save He who exercises *universal Providence*, 1, 2.
 " and looks so far to the Good of all Men, as to provide
 " them in common and sufficient or effectual Means for obtaining
 " the State of *eternal Happiness* after this Life, whereof he has im-
 " planted a Desire in their Minds? If the Laick or Vulgar worship
 " any other God, who does not exercise this *universal Providence*,
 " are they not guilty of false Worship or Idolatrie? and if any one
 " deny this *common Providence*, is he not guilty of *Treason* against
 " the *Divine Majesty*, and of a Contempt of his Good-
 " ness, yea, and of *Atheism* it self? Thus Herbert. Blount Rel. Lai-
 " Blount proposes the same Query, but more shortly ci, P. 90.
 " thus, Whether there be any *true God*, but he that
 " useth *universal Providence* concerning the *Means* of coming to
 " him?

The Design of this *Query* is to prove the *Necessity* of a *catholick Religion*,
 or a *sufficient Religion* common to all Mankind, and to fix the black Note
 of *Atheism* upon all who deny it. The Argument whereby this is evin-
 ced, is the very same, which we have examin'd above, as the *Deists*
 first and great Argument. What is added concerning *universal Pro-*
vidence, we did consider in our Answer to Herbert's first inducement
 to *Deism*. And so we might intirely pass this *Query* as answer'd al-
 ready, were it not for the seeming Advantage given to it by this new
 Dress, wherein it appears.

This *Query* has a direct Tendency to drive Men into *Atheism*, and
 tempt them to lay aside all *Worship* for Fear of falling into *Idolatry*. It is
 in it self evident, That if God has given all Mankind, or to every Man
Means sufficient and *effectual* to lead them to *eternal Happiness*, they must
 know of it, or, at least, there must be easy Access for them to know it:
 With what Propriety of Speech can it be said, That the Means leading
 to *eternal Happiness*, are given to every Man to be by him us'd for that
 End, if they know them not, or, at least, if the Knowledge of them be
 not easily accessible to all, who will apply themselves to an Enquiry after
 them? nor is it less evident, That the *Suitableness*, *Efficacy* and *Sufficiency*
 of these *Means*, for reaching this *End*, must be sufficiently intimated
 to them. If it is not so, how can Men rationally be oblig'd to use
Means which they do not know to be proper for compassing the *End*?
 With what Courage or Confidence can any rational Man with great

Application, over many Difficulties, use, and all his Life continue in the Use of *Means*, concerning which he has no Assurance, That they will put him in Possession of the *End* ? After all his Pains he may miss the *End* he had in View. How can any reasonable Soul please it self in such a Course ? Can it be reasonably thought worthy of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God to give Man the *Means* of attaining *eternal Happiness* and *Means sufficient*, and yet leave Men in the Dark as to the *Knowledge* of this, That they are design'd for, and sufficient to reach the *End* for which they were given ? What can rationally induce Men in this Case, to give God the Praise of his *Goodness*, in affording them these *Means*, or to use them for that *End*, for which they were given, if this is hid from them ? It is then evident, That, if God has afforded all Men *sufficient Means* of reaching *eternal Happiness*, they must know this, or, at least, have easy Access to know these *Means*, what they are, and what they are design'd to, proper for, and will prove effectual to this *End*. And consequently, if Men find not such *Means* after Search, they have evidently Reason to conclude, That God has left them without them, at least, that they want them in their present Circumstances ; since after all their Inquiries they cannot find them, nor can they discover that any *Means*, they know of, will be effectual to reach this *End*.

This is evidently the Condition of Man at present, left to the *meer Light of Nature*. We have prov'd just now, That if God had given these *sufficient Means*, every Man must, at least, upon Application, have had Access to know them, and to know that they are *sufficient*.

But, upon Application, they find no such Matter, and therefore have Reason to suspect, That God has not given them these *Means*, if not positively to conclude that they are without them. *Herbert* himself glories that he was the *first* who found out what these *Means* were. They had escap'd the Knowledge and Industry of the most Learn'd and Diligent before his Time. And if so, certainly the Vulgar behoov'd to be at a Loss about them. When he has found them, he

Herbert de Rel. Gent. P. 217. dare not be positive about their *Sufficiency* : " Quam

" etiam ob Causam, neque ea sufficere (ad Salutem,

" viz. æternam) protenus dixerim, says he. Yea,

he more than insinuates, That we cannot come to be positively assur'd of their *Sufficiency*, and so must remain in the Dark, since the Determination of this depends upon the Sentiments of God, which are known to none, as he says. Now when a Man so learn'd, so diligent, and so

so evidently prepossess'd with a strong Inclination to favour any Means that had a *Shew* of *Sufficiency*, found so much Difficulty to hit upon any such, and did so evidently hesitate about the *Sufficiency* of these he had found; must not the *Laicks*, for whom, upon all Occasions, he pretends so much Concern, hesitate more? Yea, have they not Reason evidently to conclude, That there are no such Means provided for them?

But *Herbert* here teaches them, That none is to be acknowledg'd the true God, nor worshipp'd as such, who has not provided every Man in effectual and sufficient Means for attaining eternal Happiness. Well, may the *Laicks* say, "I neither know, nor can I ever be satisfied, That I have such Means; yea, I have the greatest Reason to think that I want them; if the good God had given them, he would not have mock'd me, by concealing them, and so precluding me from the Use of them; he would have pointed me to them, and intimated their *Sufficiency*, so as to make it knowable to me, upon Application, without which he could never expect that I should use them: I have therefore Reason to conclude my self destitute of them, and so I will worship no God, since there is none that has provided me in the Means necessary to eternal Happiness: For if I should, I would be guilty of worshipping one, who is an Idol, and not the true God. Here we see where this Gentleman's Principles must inevitably lead the poor *Laick*, either to direct *Atheism*, or to worship one, whom he has Reason vehemently to suspect to be meerly an Idol, and not the true God.

Having thus discover'd the dangerous Tendency of this Query, I shall now give a direct Answer to it. And to it I say, That the GOD, who makes Man, implants in his Child's Mind a Desire of eternal Felicity, intimates to him that he is made for this End, obliges him, in Duty, to pursue this End, under a Penalty, in Case he fail of it; and yet denies or leaves his Child without the Means that are absolutely necessary for compassing it, antecedently to any Fault upon the Child's Part, will scarce obtain the Titles of *Optimus Maximus*, Great and Good, or of a common Father.

But the God, who made Man perfect, in his original State, and put him in the full Possession of all the Means, that were necessary to obtain that End, whatever it was, for which he was made, and which he was in Duty oblig'd to pursue, loses not his Interest in, and unquestionable Right to the Title of *Optimus Maximus*, Great and Good; nor does he cease to be a common Father, and to act the Part of such an one, if, when his Children contrary to their Duty, have rebell'd against him,
by

by their own Fault dropp'd the Knowledge of the *End*, for which they were made, lost the Knowledge of the *Means*, whereby it is to be obtain'd, put themselves out of a Capacity of using the *Means*, or reaching the *End*, if, I say, in this case, he leave them to smart under the Effects of their own Sin, and treat them no more as *Children*, but as *Rebels*, who can blame him? Does he not act every Way as it becomes one, who by the best of Titles is not meerly a *Father*, but the *Sovereign Ruler* and *Governour* of all his Creatures, to whom of Right it belongs to render a just *Recompence* of Reward to every Transgressor?

Now, this is the Case, as we have already proven. If the *Deists* will make their Argument conclude, they must prove, That this is not the Case with Man. And when we see this done, we shall then know what to say. Till then, we are not much concern'd with their *Query*. If they say, *How can this be*? Can Men by the *Light of Nature* know how this came to pass? I answer, That's not the Question, how it came to be so; but whether, in Fact, it be so? That it really is thus, is before proven. The *Heathens* have confess'd it. And tho' we should never come to be satisfied, how it came about, yet that it really is so is enough to acquit God.

Nor is God's *universal Providence* hereby everted, he still governs all Mankind suitably to their Condition. He rules those, whom of his sovereign and undeserved Grace, he has seen meet to deal with, in Order to return to his Family, in a way of *infinite Mercy* and *Grace*. He governs the rest of the World, whom in his *Sovereign* and *Adorable Justice* and *Wisdom*, he hath left to ly under the dismal *Consequences* of their own Sin, in a Way becoming their State. He provides them in all Things, that do necessarily belong to the *Ends*, for which they are spar'd. Further, he leaves himself *not without a Witness* as to his *Goodness* in that he does good, gives them *Rain from Heaven*, and *fruitful Seasons*, filling their *Hearts with Food and Gladness*. Which is *Sufficient* to shew his *Super-abundant Goodness*, that reaches even to the *unthankful and evil*, and gives them Ground to conclude, That their Want of what is further necessary, flowes not from any Defect of *Goodness* on his Part; but from their own *Sins*, of many of which their own Consciences do admonish them. If God vouchsafe the *Means* of Recovery to any, they have Reason to be thankful to *Sovereign Grace*. If God give not, what he may justly refuse, who can in Justice complain of him? They must leave their *Complaint* upon themselves and acquit God. And while

while Man is continu'd in *Being*, it will still remain his indispensible Duty to worship this God, who made him, spares him, notwithstanding of his Sins, for a Time, punishes him less than his Iniquities deserve, and confers many other undeserv'd Favours on him. Nor is he guilty of *worshipping an Idol* in doing so.

Thus we have answer'd this *Query*: And I might now propose to the *Deists* a *Counter-query*, Whether they, who make that necessary to the Support of the *universal Providence* of God, his *Goodness*, and consequently his *Being*, of which no Man can be sure that it *really* is, which all Men have Reason to believe is not, and which most Men, who have made it their Business to consider the Case seriously, do firmly believe not to be in *Being*, may not reasonably be suspected to design the Overthrow of *these Attributes* of God, and consequently of his very *Being*? Thus *Vaninus* endeavour'd to establish *Atheism*: he ascribes *such Attributes* to God, and endeavour'd to fix such Notions of his *Perfections*, as could not be admitted, without the Overthrow of other *Perfections*, unquestionably belonging to him, or own'd in any Consistency with *Reason* and *Experience*. For he well knew, That if once he could bring Men to believe God to be *such an one*, if he was, they would be brought under a Necessity of denying, That there was *any GOD*.

Query II. *Whether these Means appear universally otherwise, than in our foresaid five catholick Articles?*

Blount Rel. Laici
P. 90. Herb. Rel.
Laici, Append.

These Gentlemen think they have by their *first Query* sufficiently prov'd, That there must be a *catholick Religion*: Now they will prove theirs to be it. But I have overthrown the Foundation, and so the Superstructure falls. I have evinc'd, That there is no such *catholick sufficient Religion* by *Reason* and *Experience*. I have prov'd, That the Pretence of its being necessary to support the Notion of God's *Providence* and *Goodness*, can never possibly perswade any considerate Man, to believe against his *Reason* and *Experience*, against the Sight of his Eyes, and what he feels within himself, that he really is in Possession of a *sufficient Religion*, without *Revelation*; and consequently, that the urging of this Pretence can serve for nothing, if not to make Men question the *Goodness* and *Providence* of God, and so his very *Being*, to the Overthrow of *all Worship* and *Religion*. I have moreover made it appear, That these *five Articles* are not *catholick*, and tho' they were so, yet are not *sufficient*.

Query

Blount Rel. Laici
P. 91. Herb. Rel.
Laici, Appendix.

Query III. "Whether any Thing can be added to these five Articles or Principles, that may tend to make a Man more honest, vertuous, or a better Man? So Blount. To this Query Herbert adjects a Clause, viz. *Provided these Articles be well explain'd in their full Latitude. And is not this the principal End of Religion?*

By the foregoing Queries the Deists think they have prov'd the Necessity of a *catholick Religion*, That their five Articles is this *catholick Religion*: By this Query they pretend to prove their Religion sufficient.

To this Purpose they tell us, That their five Articles are sufficient to make a Man *vertuous, honest and good*; That this is the *principal End of Religion*; and that nothing can be added to them, which can be any Way helpful as to this End. If by making a Man *vertuous, honest and good*, they mean no more, than the *Heathens* meant by these Words, who took them to intend no more, but an *Abstinence* from the more gross outward Acts of Vice, contrair to the *Light of Nature*, with some Regard in their Dealings among Men, to the common and known Rules of Righteousness, and Usefulness: If, I say, this is their Meaning, which I conceive it must be, then I deny that this is the *Principal End of Religion*. No Man that understands what Religion means, will say it. The *Heathens* were influenc'd to this by other Motives, than any Thing of Regard to the Authority of the *One true God*. Their *Ethicks*, which enjoin'd this Goodness, Vertue and Honesty, press'd it by Considerations of a quite different Nature. Of God his Legislature, his Laws are such they took little or no Notice, as we observ'd from Mr. Lock before; and therefore, whatever Usefulness among Men there was to be found in their Vertues, they had nothing of Religion, properly so called, in them.

But if by making a Man *honest, vertuous and good*, they mean the making of him inwardly holy, and engaging him in the whole of his Deportment, in both outward and inward Acts, to carry as becomes him, toward God, his Neighbour and himself, with a due Eye to the *Glory of God*, as his End, and a just Regard to the Authority of God, as the formal Reason of this Performance of Duty in outward and inward Acts: If, I say, they take their Words in this Sense, I do owne this to be one of the principal Ends of Religion. But then I deny that ever any Man, by their five Articles, as taught by the *Light of Nature*, or by any other of the like Kind, known only by the meer *Light of Nature*, was in this Sense, since the Entrance of Sin, made *vertuous and good*. Nay, the

moral

moral Heathens were not led to that Shadow of *Vertue* and *Goodness*, which they had, in the Sense before mention'd, from any Regard to these *five Articles*, as they are *Articles of Religion*; that is, as they are *Principles* directive as to the Duty, which Man owes to the *One, only True and Supreme Being*.

And taking *Vertue, Goodness* and *Honesty* in this last Sense, which is that alone, wherein we are concern'd, I have above proven the *Light of Nature*, and particularly these *five Articles*, as known by it, utterly *insufficient* to make any Man *vertuous, honest* and *good*. And I have demonstrated not *one*, but *many Things* beside what is contain'd in these *five Articles*, however explain'd to the utmost Advantage that can be done by *meer unassisted Reason*, to be *absolutely necessary* to the *Ends of Religion*.

Nor will what *Herbert* has adjected mend the Matter, *viz. That his Articles must be well explain'd in their full Latitude*. These Words, if they have any Sense, it is this, it's not enough to believe and receive our *Articles*, as in general propos'd, this will make no Man *good*. He must not only, for Instance, agree to it, That there is *one supreme God*, and that he is to be *worshipp'd* by a *vertuous Life*; but he must be acquaint with all the *Attributes* of *this God*, necessary to be known, in Order to the Direction of his Practice, and he must understand and be fix'd as to the Nature, Measure and all other necessary Concerns of these *Vertues* that belong to his Duty. This is undeniably the Meaning of this Expression, and this inevitably overthrows all that our Author has been building. Were these *five Articles*, in this Latitude, *universally agreed to*? Our Author knew the contrary. If any Man should assert it, it were enough to make him be hiss'd off the Stage, as either brutishly ignorant of the World, or impudently disingenuous. Well then, our *catholick Religion* is lost. Again, since the Explications belong as much to our Author's *Religion* as the *Articles* themselves, (for without them he confesses the *Articles* not *sufficient*) how shall the *poor Laick* ever be satisfy'd about them? Have there not been as many, and as intricate Disputes about them, as about the *Articles of Reveal'd Religion*? Where is now the *boasted of Agreement*? Where is the *uncontroverted Religion*? What *Attribute* of God has not been questioned, disputed and deny'd? Have not his *Creation* of all Things, his *Providence*, &c. which of all others have the most remarkable Influence upon Practice, by many been deny'd? Have not horrid Notions of them been advanc'd by some? What will now become of Men of *squemish Stomachs*, that can ad-

mit of no Religion, but *one* that's smooth, and has no rugged Controversies in it? Why, poor Gentlemen, they must part with our Author's Religion, and so be, what they were before, *Men of no Religion*. Upon the whole we see that this Query, design'd to prove the *Deists Religion* sufficient, has proven it a *Chimera*.

Query IV. "Whether any Things that are added to these five Principles from the *Doctrine of Faith*, be not un-

Blount Rel. Laici,
P. 91.

"certain in their *Original*? So Blount. Herbert to this adds, That tho' God be true, yet the *Laicks*

Herbert Rel. Laici,
Appendix, P. 3.

"can never be certain about *Revelation*: For,

"says he, How do ye know that God spake these Words to the *Prophets*? How do ye know that

"they faithfully repeated or write what God

"spoke to them, and no more? How do ye know that Transcribers

"have perform'd their Part faithfully? How do ye know, That that

"particular *Revelation* made to a particular *Priest, Prophet or Lawgiver,*

"concerns not only all other *Priests and Lawgivers,* but also the *Laicks*?

"Especially how shall ye know this, if the Matter of *Revelation* require

"you to recede from *Reason*? Thus he. And here we have a Proof

of the fourth *Reflection* of his unfair Treatment of the *Christian Revelation*, which we made above Chap. 13. For either he insinuates, That the

Scriptures teach Things contrary to *Reason*; and if so, where was our

Author's Ingenuity when he call'd it *optima Religio*, and upon other

Occasions pretended so much Respect to it? Does not this justify our

Charge of *Disingenuity* against him, in the first *Reflection* we have made,

in the Place now referr'd to? If he owns, That this is not the Fault of

the *Christian Religion*, but of other pretended *Revelations*; then he justifies

our fourth *Reflection*, wherein we charge him with jumbling *Revelations,*

true and false together, that have, at least, seemingly fair Pretences,

and these that have none, and deceitfully charges upon all in *Cumulo*,

the Faults peculiar to the worst. If this is not enough to persuade

you to the Truth of his Protestation above-mentioned, viz. That he

design'd no Hurt to the *Christian Religion*, he has an Observation, with

which he concludes this Query, that will beat the Perswasion of it into

your Brains, or else of somewhat beside, and it is this in his own

Words. "I think it worthy of the *Laicks* Obser-

Herbert. Ibid.

"vation, That there is this Difference betwixt

"the pretended *Revelations* offer'd to us, by the

"*Lawgivers,* and those offer'd to us by *Priests, Interpreters of the Oracles*

"of

“ of GOD, (under which Notion he takes in all *Prophets*) whether they
 “ gave their *Revelations* or *Responses* for Hire, or meerly to set off their
 “ own Conceits (*sive venales sive nugivendi* ;) that the *Revelations*, which
 “ the *Lawgivers* pretended they had from Heaven and promulgate as
 “ such, did usually make the People more just and sociable, or agree
 “ better together ; whereas the *pretended Revelations* of the *Priests* and
 “ *Prophets*, of what ever Sort (or in his own Words *Oraculorum Inter-*
 “ *pratibus sive venalibus sive nugivendis*) did usually make the People
 “ more *unjust* or *impious*, and did divide them among themselves.

Here is a rare Observation, worth Gold to the *Laick*. He may, with more Safety, receive and use the *Laws*, which *Lycurgus*, *Solon* and the other *Heathen Lawgivers* pretended they had from Heaven ; and I would add *Moses* to his Writings, but that I fear our Author has cast him, because he set up for an *Interpreter* of God's Mind, and, upon some extraordinary Occasions, acted the Part of a *Priest* : Our Author, I say, will perswade him, That he may, with more advantage, read these Writings, than those of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, or any other of the *sacred Writers*, who were not *Lawgivers*. 'Tis true, both are to be look'd upon, but as *pretended Revelations*, and so in Effect, *Cheats* : but the *Lawgivers* beguil'd the People to their Advantage: Whereas these Rogues for *Priests*, and others who join'd with them, Offer'd *Cheats* that were hurtful to Justice among Men, and the Peace of Society.

If any say, I am wresting our Author's Words, and that certainly his Comparison respects only the *Heathen Lawgivers* and *Heathen Priests*, I Answer, If this is the Meaning, it is altogether impertinent to the Design of the *Query*, which avowedly aims at this, That *Laicks* living among us (for I don't believe our Author design'd to send his Book to the *Pagans*) can never be satisfi'd as to the *Truth* of any particular *Revelation*, and all his subordinate *Queries* do directly thrust at the *Scriptures* ; and then he closes with this Observation, as of the greatest Moment to the Intendment of the *Query*. And therefore I cannot own, That I have done any Injury to our Author, in the Interpretation I have given of it ; but I have spoke his Meaning more plainly, than he thought it convenient to do. The next *Query* is to the same Purpose, and therefore we shall propose it, and Answer both.

Query V. Supposing the *Originals* true, whether yet they be not uncertain in their Explanations, “ so that unless a Man read all Authors, speak with all learn'd Men, and know all Languages, it be not impossible to come to a clear Solution of all Doubts?

Blount Rel. Laici
ubi supra, P. 91.

Thus *Blount. Herbert*, in his *fifth Query*, speaks to the same Purpose, he makes a huge Outcry about the *Schisms* and *Sects* that are among us, and tells us plainly, That if we will adhere stiffly to *Revelation*, we must of necessity, get an *infallible Judge*, to whose Decisions we must submit in all Things. He endeavours to prove that the *Scriptures* will not decide the Controversie; and impertinently enough labours to disprove what none ever asserted, That *Miracles* wrought by the Writers will not decide the Differences about the Meaning of their Writings. For its evident this *Query* only respects the *Meaning* of the *Revelation*, as the *former* did its *Original*. However, I know who will thank our Author, for asserting the Necessity of a living *infallible Judge*. If any think I have wrong'd our Author as to this, let them inspect his Book, and they will find I have done him Justice. But for the Satisfaction of those who have it not, I shall subjoin his own express Words; he informs the *Laick*, That he can never be satisfied about the *Meaning* of this *Revelation*, about which there are so many Controversies, unless either he can "*Linguas cunctas ediscere, Scriptores cunctos celebriores perlegere, Doctiores etiam, qui non scripserunt, consulere;*" "*aut aliquis saltem Controversiarum illarum ex Consensu communi summus constitueretur Judex.*" And then he goes on to prove, That there is no other possible Way of deciding these Differences, and coming to the *Meaning* of *Revelation*; but on these *two Ways*, pointed at, in the Words now quoted. The *first* is ridiculous, and therefore we must be *Deists* or *Papists*.

The Design of these *Queries* is obvious. They were afraid that their Arguments might prove weak, which they had advanc'd for the *Sufficiency* of their *catholick Religion*; and now, in Effect, they tell the *Laicks*, That if they have a Mind to have a *Religion* at all, they must close with this, which the *Deists* present them. And tho' we cannot satisfy you, may the *Deists* say, in all Points, about our *catholick Religion*; yet you must rest satisfied with it: For you can never be sure about *Revelation*, either as to its *Original* or *Meaning*. Men brought to such a Strait, since they cannot have such a *Religion* as they would wish, must take such as they can get.

These *Queries* directly attack *Revelation*; and so belong not to our Subject. The learn'd Defenders of *Reveal'd Religion* have consider'd those Trifles, and repell'd the Force of them. I shall only consider them, in so far as they belong to our Subject, and offer the few following Animadversions upon them.

I. I say, If the *Laick* must, for the Sake of those Difficulties, quit
Reveal'd

Reveal'd Religion ; he must part with the *Deists catholick Religion*, upon the same Account. *Herbert* has told us, and it were indeed ridiculous to say the Contrary, That this *catholick Religion* is comprehensive not only of their *five Articles*, but their *Explications*. Now, are there not as many, and no less intricate Debates about this *Religion*, than about that which is *reveal'd*, is not its *Sufficiency* disputed? Must not the *Laick* read all Books, converse with all learn'd Men, &c. before he can rest satisfied in it? Are there not intricate and perplext disputes about the *Authority*, *Extent*, *Use*, *Matter* and *Manner* of the Promulgation of the *Law of Nature*? Where shall the *Laick* find the *Notices* that belong to this *Religion*? Shall he turn inward, and find them inscrib'd upon his own Mind? So our Author advises. But as learn'd Men say, and pretend to prove the Contrary. And if most *Laicks* look into their own Mind, they will either say, with the Latter, That they are not there; or complain that they are become so dim, that they cannot read them, unless some charitable *Deist* will afford them his Spectacles. But when they have got them, what shall they do next for the *Explications*? Are the *Explications* written there too? The *Deists* dare not say it. But these likewise are necessary, say the *Deists*, as we have heard from *Blount* and *Herbert* before. 'Shall the *Laicks* consult the *Doctors* about their Meaning? But do not *Doctors* differ? Do not the *Magi*, and not a few learn'd *Greeks*, as *Zeno* and *Chrysippus*, &c. teach *Sodomy* to be *lawful*? Was it not the Judgment of others, That a wise Man ought *καὶ κλέψειν τε καὶ μοιχεύειν, καὶ ἱεροσυλεῖν ἐν καιρῷ, μηδεὶ γὰρ τῶτων φύσει ἀσχηρὸν εἶναι*; That is, To steal and commit Adultery and Sacrilege upon Occasions, for none of these Things are by Nature, evil. So *Theodorus* as *Hesychius Illustrius* reports in his Life. Do not *Aristippus* and *Carneades*, with many others, overthrow the whole *Law of Nature*, telling us, That nothing is naturally just or unjust, good or evil, but by Vertue of some arbitrary *Law*? Has not the same Opinion been reviv'd, broach'd and inculcated by *Hobbs* and others among our selves? Has not *Plato* long since observ'd in his *Phedon*, "That if any one name either Silver or Iron, presently all Men agree what it is that is intended; but if they speak of that which is just or good, presently we are at Variance with others, and among our selves. In a Word, He that will cast at *Revelation*, for its Controversies, is a Fool to go over to *Natural Religion*, in Expectation to be free of Controversy. Thus we are at least upon a Level with the *Deists*.

Dr. Owen on the
Sabbath Exer-
cit. 3. §. 13.

2. If the *Laick*, in Defiance of the *Deists Queries*, may reach a satisfying Assurance of the *divine Authority* of the *Scriptures*, where is then the Necessity for his quitting *Revelation*? It will quite vanish. This, I say, he may have, without troubling his Head about impertinent Queries of this Sort, if he duly attend to that one, plain and rational Direction given by our LORD Jo. 7. 17. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

The *Scriptures* containing a full Account of all the Concerns of the *Christian Religion*, are exhibited to him, and put in his Hand by the Church as a *Revelation* from God, wherein all his Concerns for Eternity are wrapp'd up. I do not plead, That the *Testimony* of the Church is a *sufficient Ground* for bottoming his Faith. But this I say, That the *Testimony* of the Church is a *sufficient Ground* for any Man to judge and conclude firmly, That its *Pretensions* are not contemptible, and that it deserves the most *serious Consideration* imaginable. But when I speak of the Church, whose Testimony this Regard is to be payed to, we set aside, as if no Consideration, a Multitude of Persons, whether of the *Clergy* or *Laick*, who do, in their Practice visibly contradict the *confess'd Rules* of their Religion. Such Persons are scarce to be reckon'd of any Religion, and their Testimony is of no Consideration, either for or against Religion. Nor do we restrict the Notion of the Church to the *Representatives* of it, much less to the *Church of Rome*, that monopolize this Name. But I take it for that *Body of Men*, of whatever Station or Quality, who have receiv'd, and do act answerably to the *Christian Religion* they profess, in some good Measure at least. Now I say, The *Testimony* of this Church, or *Body of Men*, deserves great Regard in this Matter. If we consider them, there are among them Persons of unattainted Reputation, *Enemies themselves being Judges*. Not a few of them are of unquestionable Judgment, deep Decerning, solid Learning, and strict Enquiries after Truth. They are not a few but many. Nor are they confin'd to one Nation or Age, but such there have been, in all Ages, in all Nations, where Christianity has obtain'd free Access. Many of them are Persons, whom Envy it self can't alledge byass'd, by external Gain of one Sort or of another. They are Persons of different, nay cross civil Interests, and of different outward Conditions. such are the Persons who give this Testimony. Again, If we consider their Testimony, they bear Witness to the *Christian Religion* in all its Concerns, its Truth, Sufficiency, Usefulness to all the Ends of Religion, with Respect to Time and Eternity, & its

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Efficacy for beginning, carrying on, maintaining, reviving and consummating such as sincerely receive it, in *Godliness* towards God, *Righteousness* towards Men, *Sobriety* with Respect to our selves; and that both as to *inward Principles* and *outward Acts*. Further, if we consider in *what Way* they give in their Testimony, the Weight of it will appear. They bear Witness to all this, not only by their *Words*, but by their *Deeds*, living in a Conformity to it, parting with all that's dearest to them for it, cheerfully undergoing the greatest Hardships, patiently undergoing the most cruel Torments, to the Loss of Life it self; and this they do neither upon meer Constraint, nor on the other Hand, from a rash and inadvertent Neglect of a due Regard to the unquestionable Advantage of Peace, Health, Life, and the other good Things they part with; but they venture upon *doing* and *suffering* freely and of Choice, upon a sober, rational Consideration of the Advantage of cleaving to their *Religion*, and of its being such, as will do more than compensate any Loss they can sustain for it. Again, they bear Witness to the Concerns of this *Religion*, as to a Thing, that they have not receiv'd upon bare *Hear-say*, but upon *narrow Scrutiny*, as that whereof they have the Experience. They do not only give this Testimony, when it's new to them, but after long Trial, when they are most sedate and compos'd, when they can expect nothing of Advantage by it, and when they must lay their Account with Contempt, Opposition and Loss. They give this Testimony in whatever Place they are, where it's honour'd, or where it's oppos'd. They give it with the greatest Concern; and recommend this *Religion* to those whom they wou'd least deceive, even with their dying Breath, when they dare not dissemble, and that after a long Trial, in the Course of their Lives, in the greatest Variety of outward Condition, sufficient to have discover'd the Weakness of their *Religion*, if it had any. They have made Choice of this *Religion*, and adher'd to it, under the greatest outward Disadvantages, who were not prepossess'd in its Favours, by Education, but prejudg'd against it; and they have imbrac'd it, where they had a free Choice to accept or reject it, and Advantages to tempt them to a Refusal. They do not enquire an *explicite Belief*, as *Machometans* do, but provoke to Experience and Trial. Now I dare boldly say, That this Testimony is a better, more plain, obvious and every Way, more justifiable Ground of *rational Assent* to the *divine Authority, Truth, Efficacy, and Sufficiency* of the *Christian Religion*, than can be given for the like Assent, to any other *particular Religion* whatsoever. Nay, there is more, in this one Testimony, as it is, or, at least,

may

may be qualified with other Circumstances, discernible even by the most ordinary *Laick*, here for Brevitie's Sake omitted, (the urging of this in its full Strength, not being my present Design) than can be offer'd for all the other *Religions* in the World, *Natural*, or pretending to *Revelation*, were all that can be said for them altogether put in one Argument. Any reasonable Man cannot but think his eternal Concern safer in following this *Society*, than any other whatsoever: There is not such another Company elsewhere to be met with, as might be demonstrated to the Conviction of the stiffest Opposer. But this I plead not at present. I say not, That the *Laick* should build his Perswasion of *Christianity* upon this *Testimony*. All that I make of it is this, That the *Laick* has Reason to consider the *Scriptures* as thus attested, as a Book, that has, at least, very plausible Pretences to *Divinity*, a Book that deserves a serious Perusal, a Book that cannot possibly have any obvious and unquestionable Arguments of Imposture, and consequently, that it deserves to be read through, and fully hear'd before it is cast, and that tho' there occur in it some Things, he cannot presently understand, or whose Use and Value he cannot take up, he ought not therefore to be prejudg'd against the *divine Authority* of the Book upon the Account of them, till, at least, it is heard to an End. For, who knows not that Things, which appear incredible, unreasonable, yea ridiculous, before their Causes, Order and Design are understood, may, upon Acquaintance with these, appear convincingly credible, useful and every Way reasonable? This is all I claim of the *Laick* at present, and he deserves not the Name of reasonable Man who will deny it upon such a Ground. And if the *Deists* had consider'd this, we had not been troubl'd with the many childish and trifling Prejudices, wherewith their *Oracles of Reason* and other Books are stuffed. Nor could they have been diverted from the serious Consideration of the *Scriptures*, by such pitiful Exceptions.

Well, the *Scriptures* being put into the *Laicks* Hand, thus attested, he sets himself to the Perusal of them, and such a Perusal as the Case requires, looking to God for Direction, he tries the Means appointed by them, for Satisfaction as to their *Divinity*, while he is seeking Light from God, in such a Matter he dare not expect it; if he continue in the Neglect of *known Duty*, or the Commission of *known Sin*, and therefore he studies to avoid them. He is resolv'd to follow *Truth*, as it's discover'd, and to subscribe to the Scripture Pretensions, if they give *sufficient Evidence* of themselves. Nothing is here resolved, but what is reasonable

reasonable beyond Exception. 'n Pursuance of this just Resolution, he reads them, and upon his Perusal, what Passages he cannot understand, or reach the Reason of, he passes at present and goes on, till he see further what may be the Intendment of them. And he finds in plain and convincing Expressions, his own Case, and the Case of all M n by Nature, clearly discover'd, and urg'd upon him by this Book; the Words pierce his Soul, dive into his Conscience, and make manifest the *Secrets of his Heart*, known to none but God, manifest his *Sins*, in their *Nature and Tendency*, and all their Concernments. His Conscience tells him, *All this is true* to a Title, tho' he did not know it before, and none other, save the Heart-searching God, could know what was transacted within his Heart, tho' overlook'd by himself. The Discovery not only carries with it an Evidence of Truth, which his Conscience subscribes to; but the Words wherein it is expressed, bear in themselves upon his Soul with a *Light, Authority and Majesty* formerly unknown, evidencing their Meaning and Truth, and filling the Soul with unusual and awful Impressions of the *Majesty and Authority* of the Speaker. Thus being convinc'd and judg'd, and the *Secrets of his Heart made manifest*, he is forc'd to *fall down and acknowledge, That God is in the Word of a truth*. And he is ready to say, *Come see a Book that told me all that ever I did in my Life, is not this the Book of God?* Thus he stands trembling under the Sense of the Wrath of God, due to him for his Sins. He reads on, and finds in the same Book a Discovery of *Relief*, propos'd frequently in plain Passages. He is urg'd to an Acceptance of it. The Discovery carries alongs with it a full Evidence of the *Suitableness, Excellency and Advantage* of the Remedy: And by a Gush of its Goodness, or inward Sense, he is drawn to an Approbation. Upon this Approbation the promis'd Effects follow. His Fears are dissipate, his Hopes reviv'd, his Soul is made acquaint with formerly unknown and God-becoming Expressions of the Nature and Excellencies of God, and going still on, every Day repeated Experience occur of the Justness of the Discoveries the Word makes of himself, the *Authority* of its *Commands*, *Faithfulness* of its *Promises*, the *Awfulness* of its *Threatnings*: none of which fall to the Ground. He, in a Word, has repeated Experience of the *unparallel'd Efficacy* of the whole, for the Cure of his *Darkness*, his *Corruption*, &c. which despis'd other Applications; and towards his Advancement to a sincere and conscientious Regard to all his Duties, *outward and inward*, toward God and Man.

Let us now but suppose this to be the Case with the *Laick*, upon his Perusal of the *Scriptures*, tho' with Respect to innumerable Souls, it's more than a bare Supposition; upon this Supposition I say, 1. The *Laick* has the *highest Security* he can desire, That this Book is, as to its Substance, *the very Word of God*, as certainly as if it were spoken to him immediately by a Voice from Heaven. This cannot well be deny'd by any that understands this Supposition. 2. I say. The *Laick* thus convinc'd may laugh at all *Herbert's Queries* as impertinent. He finds God speaking by the Word, and owning it for his. He needs not therefore trouble himself who wrote it, or whether they were honest Men who transcrib'd it, or whether they perform'd their Part, whether it was design'd for him; and the like may be said of all his other *Queries*. He will find no Occasion for that Distinction betwixt *Traditional or Original Revelation* mention'd by *Herbert*, and in-

Lock's Essay of hum.
Understand. Book 4. Cap.
18. §. 6, 7, 8.

list'd upon by Mr. Lock, on what Design I leave others to judge. In this Case, as to the Substance it is all one to him, as if it had not come through another Hand, nor has he Reason to jealous, That God would permit to creep into, or stand in a Book, which for the Substance, he still owns and evinces to be from him, any Thing of a coarser Alloy, at least any such Corruption as might make it unworthy of him to own it, or unsafe to use it to the Design it was given for: Yea, he has the strongest Security that the Perfections and Providence of God can afford, to rest fully assur'd of the Contrary. He has no Reason to be stumbled at Passages he cannot understand, or such as by others are reckoned ridiculous, but rather to say with Socrates in another Case, *What I understand I admire, and am fully convinc'd to be every Way worthy of its Author; and therefore I conclude what I understand not, to be equally excellent, and that it would appear so if I understood all its Concerns.* finally, This Supposition takes off all Pretence of Hesitation about the Meaning of the Scriptures, as to what the Laick is particularly concern'd in. The Story of the Necessity of an infallible Judge, is built upon this Supposition, That the Scriptures are so obscure in Matters necessarily relating to the Faith and Practice of the Vulgar, that they cannot be understood by them satisfyingly, in the Use of appointed Means: This Supposition is palpably false, contrair to Scripture, Reason and Experience, as is evinc'd by our Writers against the Papists, who fully consider their Pleas, and particularly those, which Herbert and the Deists have borrowed from them, who may be consulted by the Reader.

3. Thus far I have made appear, That the Laick has the justest Reason in the World to look upon it as his Duty, or the Will of God, That he should give the Scriptures such a Perusal. 2. That in doing his Will there is a Way, at least, supposable, wherein he may reach full Satisfaction in his own Mind, in Defiance of the Deists Queries about the Divinity of the Scriptures, and reach the highest rational Security, even that of Faith, bottom'd upon divine Testimony, and inward Sense or Experience; which Herbert himself, upon all Occasions, truly asserts to be the highest Certainty. I shall now advance one Step further, and assert, That this is more than a meer Supposition, that it is Matter of Fact, That they, who do receive the Scriptures in a due Manner, especially among the Laicks or Illiterate, do find and rest upon this Ground in their Perswasion. Upon this Ground it was alone, that Multitudes did at first receive it, and for it reject the Religions they were bred in; and not as the Deists imagine, upon a blind Veneration to Teachers, Priests or Preachers, whom, by Education, they were taught to Abhor: And upon this Ground they still do adhere to it, and receive it as written in the Scriptures. The Words of Mr. Baxter, as I find them quoted by

Baxter's Animad.
on Herbert de Verit.
P. 135. quoted by
M. J. Wilson Scrip-
tures interpreter as-
serted, Appen. P. 20.

Mr. Wilson (for I have not seen Baxter's Book in Answer to Herbert de Veritate) are remarkable to this Purpose, "I think, says he, That in the very Hearing or Reading, Gods Spirit often so concurreth, as that the Will it self shou'd be touch'd with
" an internal Gust or Savour of the Goodness contain'd in the
" Doctrine, and at the same Time the Understanding with
" an internal Irradiation, which breeds such a sudden Ap-
" pre-

"prehension of the *Verity* of it, as Nature gives Men of natural Principles.
 "And I am perswaded, That this increas'd by more Experience and
 "Love, and inward Gusts, doth hold most Christians faster to Christ,
 "than naked Reasonings could do. And were it not for this, unlearn'd,
 "ignorant Persons were still in Danger of Apostasy, by every subtle
 "Caviller that assautes them. And I believe that all true Christians have
 "this Kind of internal knowledge, from the *Suitableness* of the *Truth* and *Good-*
 "*ness* of the *Gospel* to their new quickn'd, illuminated, sanctify'd Souls. The
 Apostle tells us, *God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath*
shin'd into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the
Face of Jesus Christ. If the *Deist* say, How proves the *Laick* this to me? I an-
 swer, That is not the Question. For the Design of the *Deists* in these *Queries*, is
 to prove, That the *Laick* cannot be assur'd about the *Original* and *Meaning* of
Revelation in his own Mind, and so must close with their *catholick Religion*. Now
 in direct Contradiction to this, I say, here is a Ground to stand upon. And if he
 has this Ground, even a sober *Deist* must allow he has no Reason to be mov'd
 from it, but must fully know that the *Doctrines* are of God. And so I have over-
 thrown the Design of the *Query*. As for the *Deists* Question, how he proves it
 to others, it is impertinent. It is not reasonable to expect, That every common
 Man can stop the Mouths of Gain-sayers. It is enough for him, if he can give
 a Reason, which is good, and must be own'd such in it self. If the *Deist* question
 Matter of Fact, that he finds Matters so and so; I answer, A blind Man may
 question whether I see this Paper now before me; and yet I have good Reason to
 believe it is there, tho' I should fail of convincing him.

If the *Deist* say, I have perus'd the *Scriptures*, and found no such Effect; I
 answer, In Matters of Experience one *Affirmative* proves more than twenty *Nega-*
tives; unless the Application is in all Respects equal, and the Effect depend upon
 a necessary Cause: For where a voluntary Agent is the Cause of the Effect, there it
 does not always necessarily follow upon the like Application. But to wave this
 General, which would require more Room to explain, than I can allow it in this
 Place, I say further to the Complainer, Have you given the *Scriptures* such a *Peru-*
sal, as I have prov'd in a Way of Duty, you are oblig'd to do? Have you us'd
 the *Means*. in so far, at least, as is possible for you? Have you sought, have you
 waited for God's *Guidance* and *Preservation* from *Mistake*, and from *unjust Pre-*
judices against him, his *Works*, his *Word*, if this be such, and his *Ways*? Do you
 carefully study to avoid what may reasonably be thought, even by a considerate
Heathen, to obstruct the Grant of the Assistance desir'd from God? Do you
 carefully avoid known Sin? Do you endeavour the Performance of what you
 know to be Duty? Are you resolv'd to follow in Practice where Light leads?
 If you dare not frankly answer, you have no Reason to complain. For my
 own Part, I am perswaded, That in Fact, none who *have done his Will* even thus
 far, have Reason to table a Complaint against the *Word*. Others who take a quite
 contrary Course, are unreasonable in the Complaint. Disputes about what *might be*
 the Case, upon Supposition of a Person's doing all, that in his present Circumstances
 he is able to do, and yet miss of Satisfaction as to the divine Authority of the
Word; until the Subject of this Question be found, I think not my self concern'd in,

at least in a Controversy with the *Deists*. It's unreasonable to question the *Scriptures Authority* or the *Evidence* of it, upon Suppositions that never were in *Being*, and I am perswaded, never shall have a *Being*.

But these Things I leave. This Dispute lies wholly out of our Road. But I have been oblig'd to this Digression, in Pursuit of the *Deists* impertinent *Queries*. I say, *impertinent*, because, were all granted that's aim'd at in these *Queries*, it will not avail one Rush, towards the Proof of the Point the *Deists* are on, viz. *the Validity of their Religion*: For were *Reveal'd Religion* uncertain, is it a good Consequence, that therefore the *Deists Religion* is *certain*? What I have said in Defence of *reveal'd Religion*, I would have to be look'd upon only as a *Digression*, and not as a full *Declaration of my Opinion*; much less wou'd I have this understood as the Substance of what can be pleaded on Behalf of that *blest'd Book* that has brought *Life and Immortality to Light*. This is not the hundredth Part of what even I could say, were this my Subject. And others have said, and can plead much more than I am able. However, this I ow'd to the *Truth of God*. Such as would see all these Pretences against *Revelation*, repell'd, are desired to consult those, who design'dly treat of this Subject.

There are other Things in these *Queries* now animadverted upon, that deserve rather Contempt than an Answer. In particular it's suppos'd, as one of the *principal Foundations* of those two *Queries*, now under Consideration, That a Man cannot reach Certainty in his own Mind upon solid Grounds, and rationally acquiesce in it as such, unless he knows all that can be said against it, read all Books, converse with all learn'd Men, &c. than which there is not a more extravagant Expression in *Bois* and *Garragantua*. Admit it, and I shall demonstrate against any that will undertake it that *nothing is certain*. I cannot but admire that so learn'd a Person as *Herbert* cou'd use such an extravagant Supposition. But what will not a bad Cause drive a Man upon? This confirms what is ordinarily observ'd, that there is no Opinion, however unreasonable, but has some learn'd Man for its *Patron*, if not *Inventer*.

We shall now go on to the rest of the *Queries* which will be of more easy Dispatch. That I have dwelt so long upon these two, is out of a *Regard to Revelation* and its Honour, and not from any *Weight* in the *Queries*. As for them, this alone had been a sufficient Answer, which I shall propose in Way of a Counter-query, and conclude with it; *If a Laick that's illiterate cannot be satisfied as to the Truth of Reveal'd Religion, how doeth this prove the Deists five Articles to be a sufficient and good Religion?*

“ Query VI. “ Supposing all true in their *Originals*, and in their *Explications*, whether yet they be so good for the instructing of Mankind, that bring Pardon of Sin upon such easy Terms, as to believe the Business is done to our Hand? And,

Query VII. “ Whether this Doctrine doth not derogate from Vertue and Goodness, while our best Actions are represented as imperfect and sinful, and that it is impossible to keep the ten Commandments, so as God will accept of our Actions, doing the best we can? Thus *Blount* gives us *Herbert's sixth Query* in two. There is no material Defence in *Herbert* save only that he harps upon the old String, and spends himself in bitter *Invectives* against the *Scripture Doctrine* about the *Decrees of God*.

God, of which we have said enough before. And therefore I think it needless to burden this Paper with his Words.

The two former *Queries* struck at *Scripture Revelation* it self, these two strike at the *Matter* contain'd in the *Scriptures*. And here there is a double Charge laid against the *Doctrine* reveal'd in the *Scriptures*, as *black* as Hell can invent, and as *false* as its *black*. The *sixth Query* Charges it with *favouring Sin*, by bringing *Pardon* upon too *easy Terms*: And the *seventh* charges it with *derogating from Vertue*.

For an Answer to both, I might oppose *Experience*. *Sin* is no where by any so oppos'd, *Vertue* no where so *sincerely cultivated*, as among those, who sincerely receive the *Doctrine* of *Satisfaction*, and believe the utmost as to the *Inability* of Man in his present fallen Case, without *supernatural Assistance*, and *gracious Acceptance* to please God. Dare the *Deists* compare with them in this Respect? If they should, I know what would be the Issue, if the Judge had Conscience or Honesty. A *Socrates*, *Seneca* or *Plato* deserves not to be nam'd in the same Day with the meanest serious *Christian*, that believes these *Doctrines*, either with Respect to *Piety* toward God or *Duty* toward Man.

But as to the *first Charge*, I say the Ground of it is *False*; the *Query* is *disingenuous* and *deceitful*. The Ground of it is a Supposition, that *Revelation* excludes the *Necessity* of *Repentance*. This is manifestly false: both *Herbert* and *Blount* knew it to be false; and could not but do so, if ever they read the Bible. And the *Query* comparing *Revelation* upon this known Mis-representation, with *natural Religion*, is shamefully *disingenuous*. Let the *Query* be, Whether it is more favourable to *Sin*, to say, It is not to be pardon'd without *Satisfaction* to *Justice* by *Christ*, and *Repentance* upon our Part, as *Revelation* teaches; or, that upon our *Repentance* meerly God is oblig'd to pardon it, as the *Deists* say? Now I leave it to the *Deists* to Answer this.

As to the *second Charge*, *Revelation* derogates nothing from *Vertue*. It teaches indeed that our best Actions are imperfect, and he knows not what *Perfection* means, or what is requir'd thereto, that will deny it. It teaches that *they who are in the Flesh cannot please God*. It talks at another Rate than *Herbert* of the Condition of *sinful Man*, as to Acceptance with God. He gives him a Direction, "Cum Bonum pro virili præstas, Herb. de Veritate, P. 108. "Mercedem a Bonitate illa supremâ pete, exige, habe; "quo Pacto reverâ sapias. That is, *manfully perform your Duty as you can* (and what ever *Sin* remain) *ask, demand, and have your Reward*; This is the Way to be truly Wise. This petulant Advice the *Scripture* doth not justify, and *sober Reason* reprobates. Where *Sin* interveens, whatever the Sinner do, in Way of Obedience, I conceive it will be as good Wisdom as our Author teaches him to be very sober, with his *Exiges* or *Demands*. But to return, *Revelation*, by teaching Man's *Inability*, doth not hinder him from *Vertue*; but takes him off from his own *Strength*, which would fail him in the Performance, and leads him where he may get *Strength*, and where innumerable Persons have got *Strength* to perform Duty acceptably; and it points to the only Ground, whereon sinful and imperfect Obedience can be accepted with, or expect a *Reward* from God.

Query VIII. "Whether speaking good Words, think- *Blount* Rel. Laici, P. 92.
ing good Thoughts, and doing good Actions be not

the

“ the just Exercise of a Man's Life? or that without imbracing the foresaid
 “ five Principles or Fundamentals, it be impossible to keep Peace among
 “ Men, that God may be well serv'd? Thus Blount. This is Herbert's
seventh and last Query, and he only adds one
Herb. Rel. Laici, Appen. Clause to it, wanting here; “ Whether the Laick may
 “ not spend his Time better in those Exercises mention'd,
 “ than if he imploy'd it in deciding Controversies, he does not understand?

The suppos'd Necessity for the Laick's perplexing himself with Controversies, at which Herbert here aims, in Case he see meet to imbrace Revelation, we have above weighed and cast. But as to the Query itself, it is utterly impertinent. For this is the Question they should have propos'd, *Whether their Religion is sufficient to bring a Man to these just Exercises, and to maintain Peace in Society?* And not as they propose it, *Whether these Exercises be in themselves good*, which no Body denies? Let this be the Question, and we Answer negatively. For this we have given sufficient Reasons above.

Query IX. “ *Whether the foresaid five Principles do not*
Blount Rel. Laici. P. “ *best agree with the Precepts given in the ten Com-*
 92, 93. “ *mandments, and with the two Precepts of Jesus Christ,*
 “ *viz. To love God above all, and our Neighbour as our*
 “ *selves? as well as with the Words of St. Peter, That in every Nation he that fear-*
 “ *eth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of God?*

This Query is the same with Herbert's *seventh and last Perswasive to Deism*, which we have answer'd above. It's falsely suppos'd that Revelation teaches, That the Knowledge of the ten Commands, or Christ's Summary of them, is sufficient to Salvation. Yea, Revelation teaches expressly, That no Man can practise them without Grace from Christ, and that there is no other Way of Salvation but by Faith in him. Again, It is falsely suppos'd, That the Agreement of these Articles with (that is to say their not contradicting) these Commands, proves them a sufficient Religion. This Argument, if it proves any Thing, it proves too much; for it will prove any one of them alone to be sufficient. If the Deists mean, That their five Articles, not only are not inconsistent with, but sufficient to bring Men the Length required by the ten Commands, our Lord's Summary of them, or to fear God and work Righteousness, as Cornelius did, I Answer negatively to the Question, They can bring no Man to this. Cornelius, of whom Peter speaks, had imbrac'd the old Testament Revelation. What Peter speaks of Men of all Nations being accepted with God, relates to the Discovery God had made to him of his Design to admit Men of all Nations promiscuously to Acceptance with him through the Gospel Revelation: And consequently, That the Opinion hitherto receiv'd by Peter and other Jews, of the continu'd Confinement of Reveald Religion to Israel and its Privileges, was a Mistake. So that this Place helps not the Deists, if it is not cut off from its Scope and Cohesion or interpreted without Respect to it. This Way of Interpretation of Scripture is not safe. I know not where Mr. Blount learn'd it. But I can tell him where there is a Precedent of it, *Matt. 4.* And if the Deists have a Mind to follow that Precedent, they shall not be followed by me.

Query X. “ *Whether the Doctrine of Faith can by hu-*
Blount Rel. Laici. P. 93. “ *mane Reason be suppos'd or granted to be infallible, un-*
 lest

"less we are infallibly assur'd, That those who teach this Doctrine do know the
"secret Counsels of God?"

To this I Answer, That I am sufficiently secured as to the infallible Certainty of the Doctrine, if I have received the *Scriptures* upon the Ground above-mention'd, without supposing any who now teach it, to have any further Acquaintance with the *secret Counsels* of God, than the *Word* gives them.

Query XI. "Whether all Things in the *Scriptures* (besides the moral Part which agrees with our five Principles) such as Prophecy, Miracles and Revelations depending on the History, may not be so far examin'd, as to be made appear by what Authority they are or may be receiv'd?" Blount Rel. Laici, P. 93.

I Answer, *Revelation*, in all its Parts, is capable to stand the Test of the strictest Trial, provided it be just, and manag'd as becomes. But I must tell the *Deists* one Thing in their Ear, That, if the *Scriptures* once evince themselves to be from God, by sufficient Evidence, that they are oblig'd, upon their Peril, to receive all that it teaches, tho' they cannot prove it by Reason; nay, nor explain it. But what if any *Reveal'd Doctrine* be contrary to Reason? Upon the foregoing Supposition, this Query cannot be excus'd of *Blasphemy*, but is highly impertinent and unreasonable.

Query XII. "Whether in humane Reason any one may, or ought to be convinced by one single Testimony, so far as to believe Things contrary to, or besides Reason?" Blount Rel. Laici, P. 94.

One single Testimony is writ in a different Character in the Query, perhaps to give us to understand, That by it is meant the Testimony of the Revealer, God. And it cannot reasonably be understood of any other; for upon no other single Testimony save that of God, is an Assent to *Revelation* demanded, or pleaded for, by those he opposes.

This being premis'd, I say this Query consists, and is made up of three as impious Suppositions as can enter the Thoughts of any of the Sons of Men; besides that they are mutually destructive of one another. 1. It supposes that the one single Testimony of God is not a sufficient Warrant for believing whatever he shall reveal. 2. It supposes that a Revelation come from God may contain Things really contradictory to our Reason. 3. It supposes that the single Testimony of God is not a sufficient Ground to believe Things that are besides our Reason, tho' they be not contrary to it, that is, Truths, which we cannot prove by Reason, or whereabout there are some Difficulties which we cannot solve. Take these three impious Suppositions out of the Query, and it has no Difficulty in it. If we suppose once a Revelation to be from God, we must lay aside the second Supposition as impossible, viz. That it can contain any Thing really contrary to Reason. Set aside this, which makes the Query *Felo de se*, destroy it self, and let the Question be propos'd, Whether we may believe upon the single Testimony of God whatever does not really contradict our Reason, tho' it contains some Difficulties, which we cannot solve? And then I say, it's impious to deny it.

Query XIII. And lastly, "Whether if it were granted they had Revelations, I am oblig'd to accept of ano- Blount Rel. Laici, P. 94.

"thers

“thers *Revelation* for the Ground of my *Faith*? Especially if it doth
 “any Way oppose these *five Articles* that are grounded upon the
 “*Law of Nature*, which is God’s universal *magna Charta*, enacted by the *All-wise*
 “and *Supreme Being*, from the Beginning of the World, and therefore not to be
 “destroyed or altered by every whittling Proclamation of an *Enthusiast*.

This *Query* is of the same Alloy with the former. To it we Answer shortly,
 The *Christian Revelation*. in others we are not concern’d, exhibits Matters of uni-
 versal concernment, upon Evidence of their *Divinity*, capable to satisfy those who
 now live, as well as those, to whom they were originally made; and so are im-
 pertinentlly call’d another’s *Revelation*. And we are oblig’d to receive it as the
 Ground of our *Faith*, and Rule of our *Practice* as much as they. The Suppositi-
 on that is added, That it contains *Doctrines* or *Precepts* contrary to the *Law of*
Nature, is impious and false. What he adds further about the whittling *Pro-*
clamations of *Enthusiasts*, if it is not applied to the *sacred Writers*, we are not
 concerned in it. If it is apply’d to them, *First*, It’s false, That they taught
 any Thing contrary to the *Law of Nature*. *Secondly*, It’s impious to call them, in
 Way of Contempt, *Enthusiasts*; or, at least, it’s intolerably bold for any Man to
 call them such, before he has proven it, which he never did, nor shall all the
Deists on Earth, be ever able to do. *Thirdly*, It was rude and unmannerly to
 treat them with so much Contempt, especially without Arguments proving the
 Charge, whom the whole Authority of the Land, all the Persons vested with it,
 and the Body of the People, respect as Men infallibly directed of God. *Fourthly*, It
 was disingenuous to treat them thus, after such Pretensions as our Author had
 made of Respect to them, in this and his other Books.

Finally, Mr. Blount, instead of a *fourteenth Query*, con-
 cludes with the Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, as proba-
 tive of his Point. His Words run thus, “ Finally, sub-
 “mitting my Discourse to my impartial and judicious
 “Reader, I shall conclude with the saying of *Justin Martyr*, *Apol. cont. Triphon*,
 “P. 83. That all those who liv’d according to the *Rule of Reason*, were *Christi-*
 “*ans*, notwithstanding that they might have been accounted as *Atheists*, such
 “as among the *Greeks* were *Socrates*; *Hieracitus*, and the like, and among the
 “*Barbarians*, *Abraham* and *Azarias*: For all those who liv’d, or do now live,
 “according to the *Rule of Reason* are *Christians*, and in an assured quiet
 “Condition.

As to this Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, it is not probative with us, tho’ we
 honour the *Fathers*, yet we do not think our selves oblig’d to submit to all their
 Dictates. This is said, but not proven by him, either by *Scripture* or *Reason*.
 And I fear not to say, ‘Tis more than he or any other can prove. *Abraham* is
 impertinentlly class’d amongst those who wanted *Revelation*. *Socrates* & *Hieracitus*,
 in so far as they liv’d according to *Reason*, are assuredly praise-worthy, and upon
 this Account are not to be reckon’d *Atheists*. That they were *Christians* I flatly
 deny. Nor can it be proven from *Scripture* or *Reason* That their Condition is assured-
 ly quiet. And further, than this I am not concern’d to pass any Judgment about
 their State at present: What it is *that Day will manifest*.

F I N I S.

C H A P. I.

Containing some general Remarks concerning Knowledge, Faith, and particularly Divine Faith, and that both as to the Faculty and Actings thereof.

ALL Knowledge is commonly, and that not unfitly referr'd to the *Understanding* or *intellective Power* of the Mind of Man, which is conversant about *Truth*. Our *Assent* to, or *Perswasion* of any *Truth* is founded either 1. upon the *immediate Perception* of the *Agreement* or *Disagreement* of our *Ideas*, and so is call'd *Intuitive Knowledge*. Or 2. It results from a *Comparison* of our *Ideas* with some intermediate ones, which helps us discern their *Agreement* or *Disagreement*; and this goes under the Name of *Rational Knowledge*. Or 3. It leans upon the *Information* of our *Senses*, and this is *Sensible Knowledge*. Or 4. It depends upon the *Testimony* of *credible Witnesses*. And this is *Faith*.

Faith again, if it is founded upon the *Testimony* of *Angels*, may be term'd *Angelical*; if on the *Testimony* of Men *Humane*; and if it is founded on the *Testimony* of God, it is call'd *Divine Faith*: It is of this last we design to discourse, as what particularly belongs to our present Purpose.

When We speak of *Divine Faith*, we either mean the *Faculty* or *Power* whereby we assent unto *Divine Testimony*; or the *Assent* given by that *Power*. Both are signify'd by that Name, and *Faith* is promiscuously us'd for the one or other.

Faith as it denotes the *Faculty*, *Power* or *Ability* of our Minds to perceive the Evidence of, and Assent to *Divine Testimony*, is again either *Natural* or *Supernatural*. That naturally we have a *Faculty* capable of assenting in some Sort to *divine Testimony*, is deny'd by none so far as I know. But that *Ability* whereby we are at least habitually

bitually fitted, dispos'd and enabled to assent in a due Manner to, and receive with just Regard the *Testimony* of God no Man by a Nature has. This is a *Supernatural Gift*.

Several Questions I know are mov'd concerning this *Ability*. It belongs not to my Subject, neither doth my Inclination lead me to dip much in them at present. I shall only suggest the few *Remarks* ensuing.

I. It seems unquestionably clear, that Man originally had a *Power, Ability or Faculty* capable of perceiving, discerning and assenting to *Divine Revelations* upon their proper Evidence: For it is plain, That God did reveal himself to Man in *Innocency*, and that he made Man capable of Converse with himself: But if such a *Faculty*, as this we speak of, had been wanting, he had neither been capable of those *Revelations*, nor fitted for Converse with God.

We cannot conceive how Reason should be prejudic'd by the Advancement of the rational Faculties of our Souls with Respect unto their Exercise toward their proper Objects; which is all we assign unto the Work of the Holy Spirit in this Matter Dr. Owen on the Spirit, Preface, Page 9.

2. It may most convincingly be made out, That all our *Faculties* have suffer'd a dreadful Shock, and are mightily impair'd by the Entrance of *Sin* and *Corruption* of our Natures thereon ensuing; and particularly our *Understandings* are so far disabled, especially in Things pertaining unto God, that we cannot in a due Manner, perceive, discern or entertain *Divine Revelations* upon their proper Evidence, unto the Glory of God, and our own Advantage, unless our Natures are supernaturally renew'd. But this notwithstanding, the Faculty of assenting to *Divine Testimony* is not quite lost, tho' it is impair'd and rendred unfit for performing it's proper Work in a due Manner. I know none who asserts, That any of our *Faculties* were intirely lost by the *Fall*. In *Renovation* our *Faculties* are renew'd, but there is no Word of implanting *new ones*. It is certain, unrenew'd Men, such as *Balaam*, and others have had *Revelations* made to them, and did assent to those *Revelations*. Nor is it less clear, *That the Devils believe and tremble*.

III. Whether Men, in a State of Nature, whose Minds are not Renew'd, may not so far discern and be affected by the *Characters and Evidences* of God impress'd upon *Divine Revelations*, particularly the *Scriptures*, where those Evidences shine brightly, as thereby to be oblig'd, and actually drawn to give some Sort of Assent into the *Testimony* of God,

God, I shall not positively determine: Tho' the Affirmative seems probable to me. The *Impress* of a *Deity* is no less evident on the *Scriptures* than his other *Works*. *He has magnify'd this Word above all his Name*. Besides, I do not see, how the very *Faculty* it self can be thought to remain, if it is not capable of discerning any Thing of God, where he gives the most full and convincing Evidence of himself, as unquestionably he doth in the *Scriptures*. Nor do I doubt but Multitudes of sober Persons, train'd up within the Church, and thereby drawn to a more attentive and less prejudicial Perusal of the *Scripture Revelation*, do, upon sundry Occasions, find their Minds affected with the Evidence of God in them, and thereby are drawn to assent to them as his Word, tho' not in a due Manner, and that even where they remain Strangers unto a Work of *Renovation*. And sure I am, if it is so, it will leave the Rejecters of the *Scripture* remarkably without Excuse.

IV. Whether some *transient Act* of the Spirit of God is always necessary upon the Mind, to draw forth even such an Assent, as that last mention'd, I shall not determine; that in some Cases it is so, is not to be doubted. The *Faith* of temporary Believers undoubtedly requires such an Action as its Cause, and where any Thing of this Evidence affects the Minds of Persons, at present deeply prejudicial, as they were, who were sent to apprehend Christ, and went away under a Conviction, *That never Man spake as He did*; there such a *transient Work* of the Spirit of God seems necessary to clear their Minds of Prejudices, and make them discern the Evidences of a *Deity*: But whether it is so in other Cases, I shall not conclude positively.

V. But were it granted, That *Faith*, that is the Faculty or Power of believing, which is nothing else save the Mind of Man considered as a Subject capable of assenting to *Testimony*, still remains; and that tho' wofully impair'd, weakn'd and disabled, it yet continues in so far able for its proper Office or Work, that either *by the Assistance of some transient Operation of Gods Spirit*, breaking in some Measure the Power of its Prejudices, and fixing it to the Consideration of its proper *Object*, or even without this upon a more sedate, sober, less prejudicial Observation it may, tho' less perfectly perceive the Impress and Evidences of God, appearing in the *Revelations* he makes of himself, and that thereon it may be actually so affected, as to give some Sort of Assent, and reach some Conviction, *That it is God who speaks*: Were, I say, all this granted, it will amount to no great Matter; since it is certain, that every Sort of *Faith* or *Assent to Divine Testimony* is not sufficient to Answer our Duty, obtain

obtain Acceptance with God, and turn to our Salvation. Nor is it so much of our Concernment to enquire after that Sort of *Faith*, which fails of answering these Ends, and therefore I shall dip no further into any Questions about any *Faith* of this Sort, or our *Ability* for it.

VI. It is more our Interest to understand what that *Faith* is, which God requires us to give to his *Word*, which he will accept of, and which therefore will turn to our Salvation; and whence we have the *Power* and *Ability* for this *Faith*. Of these Things therefore we shall discourse at more Length in the next Chapter design'd to that End.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the Nature of that Faith, which in Duty we are oblig'd to give to the Word of God, our Obligation to, and our Ability for answering our Duty, are enquir'd into.

WE have above insinuate, and of it self it is plain, That every Sort of *Faith* or *Assent* to *Divine Testimony* answers not our Duty, nor will amount to that Regard which we owe to the *Authority* and *Truth* of God, when he speaks, or writes his Mind to us. We must therefore in the first Place enquire into the Nature of that *Faith* which will do so. Nor is there any other Way wherein this may better be clear'd, than by attending to the plain Scripture Accounts of it.

Now if we look into the *Scriptures*, we find 1. The Apostle *Paul*, 1 *Thes.* 2. 13. when he is commending the *Thessalonians*, and blessing God on their Behalf, gives a clear Description of that *Faith* which is due unto the *Word* of God. "For this Cause also, says he, thank we
" God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God
" which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men: but
" (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh
" also

“also in you that believe. If we advert to this Description, we cannot but see these Things in it, *First*, That some special Sort of *Assent* is here intended. The *Thessalonians* did not think it enough to give such *Credit*, or yield such an *Assent* as is due to the *Word* of Men, even the best of Men. *Secondly*, In particular it is plain, That such an *Assent* is intended as some Way answers the unquestionable Firmness of the *Testimony* of the God of *Truth*, which is the Ground whereon it leans. *Thirdly*, It is obvious, That somewhat more is intended than a *meer Assent* of whatsoever Sort it is: The Words plainly import such an *Assent*, or *receiving of the Word of God* as is attended with that *Reverence*, *Submission of Soul*, *Resignation of Will*, and *Subjection of Conscience*, that is due to God. This the Use of the Word elsewhere in *Scripture* strongly pleads for, and the Manner wherein the Apostle expresses himself here is sufficient to convince any Man that no less is intended. Less than this would scarce have been a Ground for the Apostle’s *Thanksgiving* to God, and for his doing this *without ceasing*. And indeed we find that this Expression elsewhere used imports not only People’s *Assent* to, but their *Consent* and *Approbation* of the Word of God; yea, and their *embracing* in Practice the Gospel, *Act. 8. 14. & 11. 1. 2.* We are told *Heb. 11. 1.* That it is the *Evidence of Things not seen*. *ελεγχος*, which we render *Evidence*, signifies properly a *convincing Demonstration* standing firm against, and repelling the Force of contrary Objections. *Faith* then is such an *Assent* as this, It is a firm Conviction leaning upon the strongest Bottom, able to stand against, and withstand the strongest Objections. 3. The Apostle more particularly describes the Ground whereon it rests, or what that demonstrative Evidence is, whereon this Conviction is founded, and that both *negatively* and *positively*, *1 Cor. 2. 5.* It stands not in the *Wisdom of Men*, but in the *Power of God*. That is, it neither leans upon the *Eloquence*, nor *Reasonings* of Men, but upon the *powerful Evidence* of the Spirit’s Demonstration, as it is in the Verse before.

Having given this short and plain Account of *Faith* from the *Scripture*, we must in the next Place prove, That in Duty we are bound to receive the *Word* of God with a *Faith* of this Sort. Nor will this be found a Matter of any Difficulty; For

I. The *Scriptures* hold themselves forth to us as the *Oracles of God*, which *holy Men of God* spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God, and wrote by divine Inspiration, and the *Holy Ghost* is said to speak to us by them. Now the very *Light of Nature* teaches us, That when God utters *Oracles*, speaks and writes his Mind to us, we are in Duty bound, readily

to assent, give intire Credit to, and rely with the firmest Confidence on the *Veracity* of the Speaker ; and further, we are obliged to attend to what is spoken with the deepest Veneration, Reverence and Subjection of Soul, and yield an unreserv'd practical Compliance with every Intimation of his Mind.

II. The Scriptures *were written* for this very End, *That we might so believe them as to have Life by them*, Joh. 20. 30, 31. And again Rom. 16. 25, 26. *The Scriptures of the Prophets according to the Commandment of the everlasting God, are said to be made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* Certainly then we are in Duty obliged to yield this *Obedience of Faith.*

III. The most dreadful Judgments, yea eternal Ruin, and that of the most intolerable Sort, are threatned against those, who do not thus receive the Words of God from his Servants, whether by Word or Writ, is no Matter. “ Whosoever shall not receive you, *nor* hear “ your Words, when ye depart out of that House or City, shake off the “ Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more toler- “ able for the Land of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* than for that City, *Mat.* 10. 14, 15. Accordingly we find the Apostles preach the Word at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, *Act.* 13. Demand Acceptance of it both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and upon their Refusal they testifie against them in this Way of the Lord's Appointment, Verse 51. And all this Severity they used without offering Miracles or any other Proof for their Doctrine, so far as we can learn, besides the *authoritative Proposal* of it in the *Name* of GOD.

IV. We find the Apostle in the Words above quoted, commending the *Thessalonians* for receiving the Word in this Manner, which is Proof enough, That it was their Duty to do so.

This much being clear, it remains yet to be enquir'd, Whence we have *Power* or *Ability* for yielding such an *Assent*, whether it is *Natural* or *Supernatural*? Now if we consult the Scripture upon this Head, We find

I. That this *Ability*, to believe and receive the Things of God to our Salvation and his Glory, is expressly denyed to *unrenewed Man*, or *Man* in his *natural Estate* 2 Thes. 3. 2. *All Men have not Faith* : 1 Cor. 2. 14. “ The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God ; “ for they are foolishness unto him : Neither can he know them, be- “ cause they are spiritually discern'd, *Joh.* 8. 47----- Ye therefore hear “ not God's Words, because ye are not of God.

II. This

H. This is expressly deny'd to be of our selves, and asserted to be a supernatural Gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. *By Grace are ye saved thro' Faith; and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.*

III. The Production of it is expressly ascrib'd unto God, He it is that fulfils in his People *the Work of Faith with Power*, 2 Thes. 1. 11. He it is that gives them, that is, that enables them, *on the behalf of Christ to believe and suffer for his Name*, Phil. 1. 29. It is one of the *Fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 22. And of it Christ is the *Author*, Heb. 12. 2. The further Proof and Vindication of this Truth I refer to *Polemical Writers*.

But here possibly some may enquire, How it can be our Duty thus to believe the *Scriptures*, since we are not of our selves able to do so? In Answer to this, I shall only say 1. The *very Light of Nature* shews, That it is our Duty to yield perfect Obedience, but yet certain it is, we are unable to answer to our Duty. 2. The *Scriptures* plainly require us to *serve God acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear*, and with the same Breath tells us, we must *have Grace* to enable us to do it, Heb. 12. 28. 3. We have *destroyed* our selves, and by our own Fault impair'd the *Powers* God originally gave us, and brought our selves under innumerable Prejudices and other Evils, whereby the Entrance of Light is obstructed: But this cannot reasonably prejudice God's *Right* to demand *Credit* to his *Word*, on which he has imprest sufficient *objective Evidence* of himself, which any one that has not this faultily lost his Eyes, may upon Attention discern. 4. It is therefore our Duty to justify God, blame our Selves, and wait in the Way he has prescribed for that *Grace* which is necessary to *enable* us, and if thus we do his Will, or aim, at least, at it, we have no Reason to despair, but may expect in due Time to be enabled to understand and know, whether these Truths are of God, or they who spoke them did it of themselves, *Joh. 7. 17*. Tho' yet we cannot claim this as what is our due.

From what has hitherto been discoursed, it is evident, That this *Faith*, whereby we assent to the *Scripture*, is supernatural, or may be so called upon a twofold Account: Because the *Power* or *Ability* for it, is *supernaturally given*, and the *Evidence* whereon it rests is *supernatural*.

In this Chapter we have directly concerned our selves only in the Proof of the *first* of these, viz. That our *Ability* thus to believe is *supernaturally given*, and this has been the constant Doctrine of the Church of God, which we might confirm by Testimonies of all Sorts, did our designed Brevity allow.

See Mr. Wilson his
Scriptures genuine In-
terpreter asserted, Ap-
pendix, P. 45. &c.

But

But our *modern Rationalists* do resolutely oppose this. The Author of a late *Atheistical Pamphlet*, that truly subverts all *Religion*, may be allowed to speak for all the rest; for he says no

Treatise of humane Reason, P. 58. publish'd 1974, and to the Credit of the Church of England with an Imprimatur, quoted by Mr. Wilson ubi supra, Pag. 13.

more than what they do assent to: He tells us, "That when once the Mystery of Christ Jesus was revealed, even humane Reason was able to behold and confess it; not that Grace had altered the Eye-sight of Reason, but that it had drawn the Object nearer to it. To the same Purpose speak the Socinians; Schlichtingius tells us, "Man endued with Understanding is no other-wise blind in Divine Mysteries, than as he who hath Eyes, but sits in the Dark: remove the Darknefs, and bring him a Light, and he will see. The Eyes of a Man are his Understanding, the Light is Christ's Doctrine. To the same Purpose doth the paradoxical *Belgick Exercitator*, that sets up for *Philosophy* as the Interpreter of the *Scripture*, express himself frequently. Nor is his pretended Answerer *Volzorgius* differently minded; tho' he is not so constant to his Opinion, as the other.

Wilson *ibid.* Pag. 7.
Ibid. Pag. 11.

But these Gentlemen may talk as they please, we are not oblig'd to believe them in this Matter, the *Scriptures* plainly teaching us, That our Minds are blind, our Understandings impair'd and obstructed in discerning the Evidence of Truth, by Prejudices arising from the Enmity of the Will, and Depravity of the Affections. Nor were it difficult to demonstrate from *Scripture*, That no Man can believe, or understand the Word of God aright, till 1. The Spirit of God repair this Defect of the Faculty, or give us an Understanding, 1 Joh. 5. 20. 2. Break the Power of that Enmity that rises up against the Truths of God as Foolishness. 3. Cure the Disorder of our Affections that blind our Minds. And 4. Fix our Minds, otherwise vain and unstable, to attend to what God speaks, and the Evidence he gives of himself. But this is not what we principally design, and therefore we shall insist no longer upon this Head: Our present Question is not about our *Ability* or *Power* to believe, but the Ground whereon we do believe. What has been spoken of the former hitherto, is only to prepare the Way for the Consideration of the latter, to which we now proceed.

C H A P. III.

The Ground, or the formal Reason, whereon Faith assents to the Scriptures is enquired after, the Rationalists Opinion about it, and particularly as stated by Mr. Lock in his Book of Humane Understanding is proposed and considered.

THO' we have spoken somewhat concerning our Ability to believe the Word of God, and the *supernatural Rise* thereof in the preceeding Chapter, wherein we have offer'd our Thoughts of that which goes under the Name of *Subjective Light*; yet this is not the Question mainly intended in these Papers. That which we aim more particularly to enquire after, is the Ground whereon the Mind thus subjectively enlightned, or by the Spirit of God disposed, fitted and enabled to discern and assent to *divine Revelations*, builds its *Assent*, and wherein it rests satisfied, or acquiesces.

The *Question* then before us is this, What is that *Ground*, whereon, or *Reason* which moves and determines us to receive the *Scriptures as the Word of God*? What is the *formal Reason* whereon our *Faith* rests, or what is the proper Answer to that *Question*, *Wherefore do ye believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and receive Truths therein propos'd as the Word of God and not of Man*?

It is in general own'd by all, who believe the *Scriptures* to be a *Divine Revelation*, that the *Authority, Truth and Veracity* of God, who is *Truth it self*, and can neither *deceive*, nor be *deceiv'd*, is the Ground whereon we receive and assent to *Propositions of Truth* therein reveal'd.

But this general Answer satisfies not the *Question*: For, tho' it is of natural and unquestionable Evidence, That God's *Testimony* is true, cannot but be so, and as such must be received; yet certain it is, That *Divine Testimony* abstractly consider'd cannot be the *Ground* of our *Assent* unto any *Truth* in particular: But that whereon we must rest, and whereon our *Faith* must lean, is, "the *Testimony* of God to it, evi-

“ dencing it self, or, as it gives Evidence of it self unto the Mind. *The Knot of the Question then lies here, What is that Evidence of God*
 “ his speaking or giving Testimony to Truths supernaturally reveal’d,
 “ whereby the Mind is satisfied that God is the Revealer? Or when
 “ God speaks, or intimates any Truth to us, how, or in what way
 “ doth he evidence to us; That he is the Revealer, what Ground is it
 “ whereon we are satisfied as to this precise Point?

Now whereas there are Persons of *three Sorts*, who may be call’d to *Assent to Divine Revelations*, the Question propos’d may be considered with Respect to each of them.

I. The Question may be mov’d concerning those Persons to whom the *Scripture Revelations* were originally made, and as to them it may be enquir’d, when God did reveal his Mind unto the *Prophets*, what was that *Evidence*, what were those *τεκμηρια* or *certain Signs* whereby they were infallibly assured, That the Propositions they found impress’d upon their Minds, were from God?

II. As to the Persons to whom they did immediately reveal these *Truths*, it may be question’d, What *Evidences* they had to move them to *assent*, and give *Faith* to those *Truths* which were propos’d to them as *Divine Revelations*? On what *Ground* did they rest satisfied, That really they were so?

III. Whereas we, who now live, neither had these *Revelations* made to us originally, nor heard them from the Persons to whom they were so given; but being compriz’d and put together in the *Bible*, they are offer’d to us as a *Divine Revelation*, and we are in Duty, upon Pain of God’s Displeasure in Case of Refusal, call’d and requir’d to believe, and *assent* to whatever is therein reveal’d, as the *Word of God* and not of *Man*; hereon it may be mov’d, What is that *Evidence* which *this Book* gives of it self, That it is of God, whereon our Minds may rest assur’d that really it is so?

As to the *Question*, in so far as it concerns the *first Sort* of *Persons* mention’d, we shall not dip much into it; all I shall say is this in the Words of the judicious and learn’d *Doctor Owen*, “ In the

Dr. Owen of the
Spirit, Book 2. Chap 1.
 §. 10. Page 104.

“ Inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and his Actings
 “ of the Minds of holy Men of old, he gave them
 “ infallible Assurance that it was himself alone by
 “ whom they were acted, *Jer. 23. 28.* If any shall
 “ ask by what *τεκμηρια* or infallible Tokens they might know assuredly
 “ the Inspirations of the holy Spirit, and be satisfied with such a Per-

“ swasion

“ swasion as was not liable to Mistake, that they were not imposed
 “ upon ? I must say plainly, That I cannot tell ; for these are Things
 “ whereof we have no Experience.

There is one Thing dropt as to this Matter by the ingenious Mr. Lock,
 that deserves some Animadversion. Tho’ he delivers nothing positively
 about those *Evidences* which the *Prophets* had, yet
 negatively he tells us, That the *Prophets* their As-
 surance did not at least solely arise from the Reve-
 lations themselves, or the Operation of the Spirit im-
 pressing them upon their Minds, which he calls the
internal Light of Assurance : But that beside this to

Of humane Under-
 standing, Book 4. Chap.
 19. §. 15. Pag. 593.
 Edition 5th, 1706.

satisfie them fully, That *those Impressions* were from God, *external Signs*
 were requisite ; and this he endeavours to prove from their desiring con-
 firmatory Signs, as *Abraham* and others did ; and from God, his giving
 such Signs undesir’d. To this Purpose his Appearance to *Moses* in the
 Bush, is by our Author taken notice of. As to the Opinion it self, I look
 on it as highly injurious to the Honour of *Divine Revelation*, and I take
 the Grounds whereon it is founded to be weak and inconcludent : For
 1. Mr. Lock, nor any for him shall never be able to prove, That these
 divinely inspir’d Persons always required or got such confirmatory Signs
 extrinsical to the Revelation or Inspiration it self ; yea, it is manifest, that
 for most part they neither sought them nor got them. 2. When
 they did seek or get them, Mr. Lock cannot prove, That
 either God or they found them necessary for the present Assurance
 of the Persons own Minds, as if that *internal Light of Assurance*,
 to use Mr. Lock’s Words, had not of it self, while it abode, been
 sufficient to satisfie the Mind fully, That it was God who was dealing
 with it, or revealing himself to it. It is plain, That other Reasons of
 their desiring such Signs may be Assign’d. When the Matters reveal’d
 were Things at a Distance, which required some extraordinary Out-
 goings of God’s Power to effectuate them, in that Case they desir’d, and
 God condescended to grant to them some such extraordinary Signs, not
 to assure them that God was speaking unto them, but to strengthen their
 Convictions of the Sufficiency of God’s Power, for enabling to do what he
 requir’d of them if it was difficult, or accomplishing what he promised to
 them in Defiance of the greatest Opposition. Sometimes *Divine Reve-*
lations were Promises of Things at a Distance, that were not to be actual-
 ly accomplished till after a long Tract of Time, and over many inter-
 venient Obstructions ; in this Case they were oblig’d to believe these
 Promises, and wait in the Faith of them, even when that Light, that first

assur'd them, was gone, and such *Evidences* or *Signs* might be of Use to enable them to adhere unto the *Assent* formerly given upon that *supernatural Evidence*, that at first accompanied the *Revelation*. Such *Signs* then might be of Use to strengthen the Remembrance of that first *Evidence*, which they had when the *Revelations* were first imparted to them. These and other Reasons of an alike Nature might sufficiently account for their desiring these *Signs*, and God's giving them: But as has been said, we design not a Determination or full Decision of this Question.

We shall only consider the Question with Respect unto the *two last Sorts* of Persons, and as to these who heard, or had *Divine Revelations* immediately from *inspir'd Persons*, our *rational Divines* seem positive, That the *Evidence* whereon they assented to what they delivered as the Mind of God, consisted in, or did result from the *Miracles* they wrought, and other *external Signs*, or *Proofs*, which they gave of their *Mission* from God. *Monsieur le' Clark* in his *Emendations* and *Additions* to *Hammond* on the *New Test.* gives us this Gloss on 1 Cor. 2. 5. "Paul says he, would have the *Corinthians* believe him, not as a Philosopher propoling Probabilities to them, but as the Messenger of God, who had received Commandment from him, to deliver to them those Truths which he preach'd, and, That he thus receiv'd them, he did shew by the Miracles which he wrought. And a little after he adds, He whose Faith leans upon Miracles wrought by God's Power, his Faith is grounded upon the divine Power the Cause of these Miracles. As to this Opinion it self, I shall express my self more particularly just now: But as to *Monsieur Le' Clark* his fetching from this Text, he had no Manner of Ground for it. Let us but look into the Verse before, and there we find the Apostle telling the *Corinthians*, That in his Preaching, he avoided the enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, and deliver'd his Message in the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power. Upon the Back of this in the 5th Verse, he tells them, His Design in doing so was, That their Faith might not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God, that is, on the powerful Demonstration of the Spirit of God, mention'd in the foregoing Verse. How *Monsieur le' Clark* came to dream of *Miracles*, and fetch them in here, while the Scope and every Circumstance of the Text stood in the Way of this Exposition, I cannot divine; for nothing is more alien and remote from the Sense of this Place. If the Author had follow'd the old approv'd Interpreter of Scripture, I mean the Scripture it self, and had look'd into the foregoing Verse

Verse and Context, he had given us a more genuine Account: But *Philosophy* now set up for an *Interpreter*, I had almost said a *Perverter*, did certainly lead him into this violent and ridiculous Gloss. But to come to the Matter it self.

Miracles can be no otherwise the Ground of any *Assent*, than as they afford Ground for, or may be made use of as the *Medium* of an *Argument*, whereby the *Divine Mission* of the Worker is concluded and proven. This then must be the Opinion of these Gentlemen, That they, who heard the Apostles or Prophets, could not be satisfy'd in their Minds, That what they said was *divinely reveal'd*, until they were convinc'd of it by Proofs drawn from *Miracles* or *Signs*, wrought by the Preacher, and that this is not merely my Conjecture, is evident from the Accounts we have of their Opinions, and *Hypothesis*, whereof this is reckon'd as a principal one, That the Mind of Man being rational cannot be mov'd, but by a rational Impression, that is, by the Force of effectual Reasons: And to the same Purpose we shall find Mr. Lock expressing himself by and by.

Spanhem. *Elench-
Controversiarum*, Page
320. Edit. 1694.

Upon this *Hypothesis* it is evident, 1. That if a *Heathen* came in to a Christian Assembly, and heard *Paul* preaching, or even Jesus Christ himself, if he had never seen them work any *Sign* or *Miracle*, he would not be obliged to believe their Doctrine. 2. If the Apostles preached to those, among whom they wrought no *Miracles*, gave no such outward *Signs*, such Persons could not be obliged to believe them, the Evidence whereon such a *Belief* is founded being deny'd. 3. They who heard them, and saw the *Miracles*, could not be obliged to assent unto their Doctrine, until by reasoning they would have Time to satisfy themselves, how far natural Causes might go towards the Production of such Effects, and how far these Things, admitting them to be *supernatural*, could go toward the Proof of this, That what they deliver'd was from God. 4. If there was any among them so dull, as not to be capable to judge of these nice Points, I do not see how, upon these Principles they could be obliged to believe. These and the like are no strain'd Consequences; for it is undeniable, That our Obligation to believe arises from the proposal of due *objective Evidence*, if this is wanting, no Man can be obliged to believe.

As to us who neither convers'd with the inspir'd Persons, to whom such *Revelations* were originally given, nor saw the *Miracles* they wrought, we are told by those *Rationalists*, That we have *historical Proofs*, That there

there were such Persons, That they wrote these these *Revelations*, which we now have, and, That they wrought such *Miracles* in Confirmation of their *Mission* and *Doctrine*: And upon the *Evidence* of these *Proofs* we must rest, they will allow us no other Bottom for our *Faith*, hence *Monsieur le' Clark* tells us, *That whatever Faith is this Day in the World among Christians depends, upon the Testimony of Men.*

Among many who have embrac'd this Opinion, Mr. *Lock* in his *Essay on Humane Understanding* has delivered himself to this Purpose, and upon several Accounts he deserves to be taken special Notice of: I shall therefore represent faithfully and shortly his Opinion, and the Grounds whereon it is founded, and make such Animadversions upon them, as may be necessary for clearing our Way. His Opinion you may take in the ensuing Propositions.

I. When he is speaking of the different Grounds of *Hum. Underst.* Assent and Degrees thereof, he says, " Besides *Book 4. Cap. 18.* " those we have hitherto mention'd, there is one Sort *S. 14. P. 564,* " of Propositions that challenge the highest Degrees *565.* " of our Assent upon bare Testimony, whether the " Thing propos'd agree or disagree with common " Experience and the ordinary Course of Things, or no. The Reason " whereof is, Because the Testimony is of such an one, as cannot deceive " or be deceiv'd, and that is of God himself. This carries with it Af- " surance beyond Doubt, Evidence beyond Exception. This is call- " ed by a peculiar Name *Revelation*, and our Assent to it, *Faith*: Which " as absolutely determines our Minds, and as perfectly excludes all Wa- " vering as our Knowledge it self.

II. This, notwithstanding he tells us in the very same *Ibid.* Paragraph, " That our Assurance of Truths upon this " Testimony, or to give his own Words, Our Assent can be rationally no higher than the Evidence of its being a *Revelation*, " and that this is the Meaning of the Expressions it is delivered in. That is, as he himself explains it, " If the Reasons proving it to be a " Revelation are but probable, our Assurance amounts but unto a pro- " bable Conjecture.

3. He distinguishes betwixt *traditional* and *original Revelation*, by the last of these, says he, " I mean that first Impression *Book 4. Cap. 18.* " which is made immediately by God on the Mind *S. 3. P. 582.* " of any Man, to which we cannot set any Bounds; " and by the other, those Impressions delivered over " to

“to others in Words, and the ordinary Ways of conveying our Con-
 “ceptions on to another. And afterwards speak-
 ing of *Immediate or original Revelation*, he tells us, *Ibid. §. 5. P. 583.*
 “That no Evidence of our Faculties by which
 we receive such Revelations, can exceed, if equal, the Certain-
 “ty of our *intuitive Knowledge*. And in the preceeding Paragraph,
 speaking of *traditional Revelation*, he tells us, “That
 “whatsoever Truth we come to the clear Dis- *Ibid. Book 4 Cap.*
 “covery of, from the Knowledge and Contempla- *18. §. 4. P. 582.*
 “tion of our own Ideas, will always be certainer to
 “us, than those, which are convey’d by *traditional Revelation*.

IV. He tells us “That true Light in the Mind
 “can be no other but the Evidence of the Truth *Book 4. Cap. 19.*
 “of any Proposition, *and hereon he goes on to tell us, §. 13.*
 “That there can be no other Evidence or Light
 “in the Mind, about Propositions that are not self-evident, save what
 “arises from the Clearness and Validity of those Proofs upon which it
 “is receiv’d : *And he adds,* That to talk of any other Light is to put
 “our selves in the Dark, or in the Power of the Prince of Darkness.

V. In the next Paragraph he tells us plainly, That
 there is no Way of knowing any *Revelation* to be from *Ibid §. 14.*
 God, but by *rational Proofs, or some Marks in which*
Reason cannot be mistaken.

VI. In this next Paragraph he tells what before we have taken
 Notice of, That the *internal Light of Assurance*, which
 the Prophets had, was not sufficient to testify, That *Ibid. §. 15.*
 the Truths impress’d on their Minds were from God
 without other Signs.

Thus far of Mr. *Lock’s* Opinion, which in Sum amounts to this, That
 even the *original Revelation*, had not in them *intrinsic Evidence*, sufficient
 to assure them on whom such Impressions were made, That they were
 from God ; that other Signs were necessary to satisfy them ; and that
 others who receiv’d such *Revelations* at second Hand, not from God im-
 mediately, but from inspir’d Persons, have no other Evidence to ground
 their *Assent* on, besides that which results from Arguments drawn from
 those Signs, whereby they did confirm their *Mission* ; and that we have
 no Evidence who saw not these Signs, besides that of the *Historical Proofs*,
 whereby it is made out, That the Persons who wrote the *traditional Re-*
velation we have, wrought such Signs, in Confirmation of their *Mission*
 from God.

It is worth our While to dwell a little here, and more narrowly consider Mr. *Locks* Thoughts, and the Grounds of his Opinion; I shall therefore offer a few Observations on this Doctrine.

I. Mr. *Lock* in his first Proposition, speaks very honourably of *Divine Faith*. As to the Assent or Act of *Faith*, he says, *That it is an Assent of the highest Degree, Assurance without Doubt.* As to the Ground of it, he says, *That it is such as challenges an Assent of the highest Degree, That it is Evidence beyond Exception.* These are goodly Words. *He has well spoken in all that he has said.* I wish that his Meaning and Heart may be found as good as his Words. *All is not Gold that glisters.* Let us then look a little more narrowly into his Meaning.

To find it out, we shall suppose that God, as no Doubt he did, does reveal immediately to *Paul* this Proposition, *Jesus is the Son of God.* Here is a *Revelation*: By *Paul* it is assented to. Well here is *Faith*. Now in his believing this Proposition, he may be said to assent to three Things, *That what God says is true, That Jesus is the Son of God, and, That God says this to Paul.*

Now, I ask Mr. *Lock* or any of our *Rationalists* that are of his Mind, To which of these three is it that *Paul* assents, with an Assent of the highest Degree, and of which he has Evidence beyond Exception.

I. Could Mr. *Lock* only mean, That we have the highest Assurance of this general Verity, *That God's Testimony is infallibly true*? No sure: For First, The Assent to this Truth is not an Act of Faith, but of intuitive Knowledge. The Truth it self is not a Truth here divinely reveal'd, but of Natural Evidence. This is not so much in this Instance expressly assented to as supposed known.

II. Doth Mr. *Lock* mean, That we assent to this Proposition, *That Jesus is the Son of God.* Had *Paul* Assurance beyond Doubt, and Evidence beyond Exception of this? But sure Mr. *Lock* knew that *Paul* in this Supposition does not assent at all to this Proposition, *Jesus is the Son of God* absolutely, but as it is reveal'd. Well then, all the Evidence that *Paul* has to ground his Assent upon, is the Evidence of this, *That God says so to him.* If then the Evidence of God, his saying so to him is not such as challenges an Assent of the highest Degree, *Paul* can not have the highest Degree of Assurance of that Proposition, the Faith whereof leans intirely upon his Assurance of this, *That God has reveal'd it.* For as Mr. *Lock* says very truly in that same Paragraph, *Our Assurance of any particular Truth, that is the Matter reveal'd, can never rise higher in*

in Degree than our Assurance of this that is reveal'd. If then Paul has not Evidence beyond Exception, That God reveals the Proposition we speak of to him, he can never have such Assurance of the Truth of the Proposition materially consider'd. Wherefore,

III. did Mr. Lock think in his Case, That Paul would have Evidence beyond Exception, challenging the highest Degree of Assent, and thereon Assurance beyond Doubt, or of the highest Degree of this, That God did in very Deed say to Paul, That Jesus is the Son of God; or of this Truth, That Jesus is the Son of GOD as reveal'd. It is the Assent to this Proposition that in proper speaking is Faith. The Assent to the general Proposition above-mention'd, is not an Act of Faith at all: Nor is the Assent to the Proposition reveal'd, materially considered, an Act of Faith. Faith in this Case, is only the Assent to that Proposition as reveal'd, or to the Revelation of it. If then, Paul has not the highest Evidence for, and thereon the highest Assurance of this, That God says this to him, his Faith can never be said to be the highest Degree of Assurance, or Assent. This then Mr. Lock must mean, or he means nothing. But yet I suppose he scarce thought so: For 1. He tells us afterwards, That we can have no Evidence for receiving any Truth reveal'd, that can exceed, if equal the Evidence we have for our intuitive Knowledge. If we have not then Evidence, equal, at least to that which we have for our intuitive Knowledge, for our Belief of God's being the Revealer, or that he speaks to us, we cannot have the highest Degree of Assurance. 2. He afterwards tells us, That we have no Evidence for this, That this or that Truth is reveal'd to us by God; but that which results from Reasons or Arguments, drawn from Marks, whereby we prove, That God is the Speaker: But Mr. Lock owns, That the Evidence of all our Reasonings, is still short of that which we have for our intuitive Knowledge. Now methinks this quite overthrows Mr. Locks goodly Concession. With what Consistency with Truth or himself, Mr. Lock wrote at this Rate, is left to others to judge.

II. Whatever there is in this Concession yielded in Favours of Faith, Mr. Lock afterwards takes Care that we, who now live shall not be the better for it: For afterwards he tells us plainly, "That whatsoever Truth we come to the clear Discovery of, from the Knowledge and Contemplation of our Ideas, will always be certainer to us, than those which are convey'd by traditional Revelation. We have no Revelation at this Day, but that which Mr. Lock calls traditional. And here it is plain, That Mr. Lock thinks that our Certainty of any Truth we have from

from this, is inferiour in Degree to any Sort of *natural Knowledge*, whether intuitive, rational or sensible.

III. It is manifest, That the Foundation of all is what Mr. *Lock* teaches in the *fourth Position* above-mention'd, wherein he tells us, *That to talk of any other Light in the Mind, beside that of Self-evidence, Reason, and Sense, is to put our selves in the Dark.* I have added this last, *the Light of Sense*, because Mr. *Lock*, tho' he mentions it not here, yet elsewhere he admits it. That we may understand Mr. *Lock's* Assertion exactly, it must be observ'd, That Writers, when they treat of this Subject, useally take Notice of a *twofold Light*. There is *subjective Light*, by which is meant either our *Ability* to perceive, discern, know and judge of Objects, or our *actual Knowledge, Assent, &c.* Again there is *objective Light*, by which they mean that Evidence whence our *Knowledge* results, whereon it is founded, and which determines the Mind to assent or dissent. Now it is of this last that Mr. *Lock* is treating in his Chapter of *Enthusiasm*, from whence this Proposition is taken. And his Opinion is this: He owns, That there is a *threefold objective Light*, which is real and a just Ground for the Mind to assent on. There is first, *Self-evidence*, which is the Ground of our *intuitive Knowledge*, resulting from the obvious Agreement or Disagreement of our *Ideas*, appearing upon first View or Intuition, when they are compar'd. Secondly, There is *rational Light*, or the Evidence resulting from Arguments, wherein the Agreement or Disagreement of our *Ideas* is clear'd by assuming intermediate *Ideas*, by the Help of which our Mind is clear'd, as to what Judgment it is to pass. Thirdly, There is the *Light of Sense*, or the Evidence resulting from *Impressions* made on our Minds by the Intervention and Means of our *Organs of Sense*.

But besides these, he admits of no other objective Light or Evidence that may be a just Ground of Assent; and adds, "That to talk of any other, is to put our selves in the Dark; yea, in the Power of the Prince of Darkness, and turn *Enthusiasts*."

This Grape must be pressed, that we may taste its Juice, how it relishes. In the Consideration of this Doctrine deliver'd by Mr. *Lock*, we shall not at present enquire whether it really does not preclude all Place for Faith, properly so called. This in the Issue will be further clear'd.

But whatever there is as to this, if Mr. *Lock's* Doctrine hold, certain it is, That either *Faith*, if there is such a Thing, must be founded on one of those three Grounds of Assent, or Sorts of Objective Light

Light, or it is altogether irrational. For an *Assent* not founded on, and to which we are not determin'd by *real objective Evidence* is brutish, irrational, and really *enthusiastick*, as being no Reason or Ground: And besides these three Sorts of Grounds, Mr. *Lock* admits of none. *Faith* therefore must be founded either on one or other of them, or it must want all Reason for it.

Further, it is to be observ'd, That Mr. *Lock* taking Self-evidence for that which is immediately perceptible without the Intervention of any intermediate *Ideas*, by the natural Power of our *intellectual Faculties* not assisted, renew'd, elevated and influenc'd by any supernatural Influence; and taking sensible Evidence for that which is convey'd by the Intervention of bodily Organs, from corporeal Substances, cannot be thought to make either of these the Ground of *Faith* to the *Testimony* of God. And therefore it must have no Reason save that *rational Evidence*, which makes the middle Sort of *objective Light*. But I need not spend Time in proving this, since it is no more than what he has taught us in the fifth Proposition above-mentioned.

This Opinion thus far explain'd is indeed the Sum, and contains the Force of what is pleaded, or, for ought I know, can be pleaded for the Judgment of our *Rationalists*. We shall therefore weigh the Matter more seriously, and proceed by some plain Steps in the ensuing Propositions.

" I. If good and solid Reasons can be produc'd for Proof of another
" Sort of *objective Light* or *Evidence*, besides those three mention-
" ed by Mr. *Lock*, it must be admitted, tho' we should not be able
" to give a satisfying Account of its Nature, and other Concern-
ments.

I. This I believe was never deny'd in the General as to other Things, by any Person or Judgment, adverting to, and understanding what he said, and why it then should be refused in this Case, I can see no Ground.

II. If any has ever in General denied this in *Words*, I am sure every Man *in Fact* admits it. Who is he that receives not many Truths, that admits not the Being of many Things, upon good Proof, from their *Causes*, *Effects*, *inseparable Adjuncts*, &c. of the Nature of which he can give no satisfying Account? We all own the mutual Influence of our *Souls* and *Bodies* upon one another, upon the Proofs we have from the *Effects*: But whoever understood the Manner, how the

Soul operates on the *Body*, or the *Body* upon it? Instances of this Sort are innumerable.

III: Sufficient Proofs must always determine our *Assent*; and if there are such in this Case, it is unreasonable to refuse it.

IV. If we have sufficient Reasons to convince us, That there is a fourth Sort of *objective Light* distinct from those three admitted by Mr. *Lock*, and only deny it because we understand not, or cannot give a clear Account of its Nature, I cannot tell, but on this same Ground we shall reject, and be obliged to refuse these three Sorts admitted by him, for the very same Reason. Mr *Lock* perhaps has done as much as any Man to explain them: But were he alive, I believe he would be as ready to own as any, That he has been far from satisfying himself, or offering what may fully clear others as to the Nature of these Things, wherein *Evidence* consists, what it is, what is *Self-evidence*, or that *Evidence* which is the Ground of our *sensible* or *rational Knowledge*, how they operate and influence the *Assent*. All his Accounts are only Descriptions taken from *Causes*, *Effects* or the like. But what *objective Light* or *Evidence* is, wherein it really consists, and the like may be said of the rest, is as much a Mystery as it was before, when he tells us, That *Self-evidence* (*Ex. Gr.*) is that which is immediately perceiv'd without the Intervention of intermediate *Ideas*. Here I learn, That it is not *rational Evidence*, that requires such intermediate *Ideas*: But this is all, unless it be, That it is perceptible by the Mind, that is, it is *Evidence*. But what *Evidence* is, I am yet to learn. I think this Proposition is plain.

" II. A fourth Sort *objective Evidence* different from those three " assign'd by Mr. *Lock* is not *impossible*.

I. If any say it is, it lies upon him to prove it. That Mr. *Lock*, or Millions who observ'd no such Light in their Minds, found themselves determin'd to assent by no other *objective Evidence* or *Light*, will not prove it *impossible*; yea will not prove, That actually there is no such *Light*; nay, will not prove, That there was no such *Light* in their own Minds. For Mr. *Lock*, though he observ'd as accurately the Manner of his Mind, its Actings, as most Men, yet might not observe it so, but that he possibly overlook'd somewhat that pass'd there. And if really Mr. *Lock* did not assent upon other *Evidence* to some Things, tho' he observ'd it not, I doubt not but by this Time he is sensible it was his Loss that it was so. It cannot be pretended, That it is *impossible* for Want of

of a *sufficient Cause*, while that God is in *Being*, who is Author of the *three Sorts of Lights*, that are admitted, and who is *the Father of Lights*. Nor can it be pretended, That the Members of this Division stand contradictorily oppos'd to one another, as it is in this, *every Being is dependent or independent*.

II. If any will say yet, It is *impossible* there should be a *fourth* or a *fifth* Sort of *Light* or *objective Evidence*, I shall desire him only to stay a while, and consider the *Light of Sense*. It is nothing else save "that Evidence " that results from Impressions made on our Minds by Means of our " Organs of Sense. Well, hereon I shall ask two Questions.

First, Is it not possible for him who made those Conveyances or *Organs of Sense* to frame more such, quite different from those we already have, and by Means of them impart to us other Perceptions, and determine us to assent on the Evidence of the Impressions convey'd to our Minds by these other Senses? If it is possible, as I see not how rationally it can be questioned, here is at least a *fourth Sort of objective Light* determining our Minds to *assent*, admitted as *possible*.

Secondly, Here I would enquire, Whether may not he, who, by these bodily Organs we already have, impresses *Ideas* upon our Minds, and determines our Assent to their Agreement or Disagreement, *immediately, without the Intervention of such Organs*, make Impressions on our Minds, whereby our Assent or Judgment may rationally be sway'd? To deny this, will look very odd and irrational to sober Men, that have due Thoughts of God. If it is admitted, we have here at least the *Possibility* of another *Ground of Assent*, or *objective Light* acknowledg'd different from those condescended on by Mr. Lock.

III. We that have the Benefit of Sight, have in our Minds a Sort of *objective Evidence* or *Light*, different from all those which Men born blind have. And why should it be then thought impossible that others may have in their Minds an *Evidence* that we have no Experience of, and that it may be equally real, convincing, or more so than any that we have.

IV. Mr. Lock grants, That there are *extraordinary Ways* whereby the Knowledge of Truth may be imparted to Men, that God sometimes illuminates by his Spirit the Minds of Men, with the Knowledge of Truths, that there is no Bounds to be set to such *Divine Impressions*. Now if all this is so, why may there not be *Evidence* of a *different Sort*, resulting from such *extraordinary Impressions, Illuminations, &c.* allow'd to be also possible?

V. Either God can reveal his Mind so to Man, as to give him the
highest

highest Evidence or *objective Light* that he speaks to him, who gets that *Revelation*, or he cannot. If he can, then there is possible an *objective Evidence*, and that of the *highest Sort*, different from those three mention'd by Mr. Lock; for that it must be different is evident, because Mr. Lock in this Case will allow no Place for *Self-evidence*, or that *Evidence* we have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, which he determines to be the *highest Degree* of these three Sorts he has admitted and own'd. Speaking of *immediate Revelation*, he says, "No Evidence of our Faculties, by which we receive such Revelations, can exceed, if equal the Certainty of our intuitive Knowledge, as we heard above. Since then this *Evidence* of the *highest Degree*, is different from that which we have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, if it is at all, it must be of a different Sort from any of those three: For by Concession it is not *Self-evidence*; and *Rational* or *Sensible* it is not; because these Sorts of *Evidence* are of a Degree inferior to *intuitive Evidence*: If then it is *Evidence* of the *highest Degree*, since Mr. Lock will not admit it to be *Self-evidence*, it must be none of the three: And so we have a *fourth Sort* admitted possible. But if God cannot reveal his Mind, so as to give the *greatest objective Evidence*, That he speaks, or is the Revealer, then I say, It is plain, and follows unavoidably, That God's Testimony can never have from Man the *highest Degree of Assent*, which Mr. Lock above expressly acknowledg'd to be its Due. It is in vain to say, That God's Testimony is infallible: For our *Assent* to any Truth upon God's Testimony, as Mr. Lock truly says, can never rise higher, than the Assurance we have of this, That really we have God's Testimony, and take its Meaning. If then God cannot give us the *highest Evidence* or *objective Light* as to this, no Truth he offers can have from us the *highest Degree of Assent*. To me this looks like Blasphemy, to imagine, That God has made a rational Creature, to whom he cannot so impart his Mind as to give it such *Evidence* as is absolutely necessary to lay a Ground for intertaining his Testimony with that Respect, which is its unquestionable Due. That his Testimony is in it self infallible, will never make our *Assent* of the *highest Degree*, unless the *Evidence* of his giving Testimony is of the *highest Degree*.

" III. We assert, That *de Facto* there really is a Sort of *objective Evidence* or *Light*, different from those condescended on by Mr. Lock.

I. The Prophets to whom *immediate Revelations* were made, had *objective Evidence* or *Light* sufficient to ground the *highest Assurance*, That the Truths impress'd on their Minds were from God. It is impious to deny it. But this Mr. Lock will not allow to be such *Evidence* as we have

have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, and all must confess, That it did not result from their *outward Senses*, and that it was not grounded on Reasonings from *Evidences*, *Marks* or *Signs*, extrinsecal to the *Revelations* themselves, seems undeniable, or even from Reasoning, and making Inferences from what was intrinsecal to the *Revelation*. For, 1. we find not, that this *Perswasion* came to them by such Argumentation or Reasoning. We can see no Ground from any Accounts we have in *Scripture* to think, That they took this Way to assure their own Minds. Yea, 2. The *Scripture* Accounts of the Way of their being convinc'd, seem all to import, That as God impress'd the Truths on their Minds, so that immediately by that very Impression, he fix'd an indelible and firm Conviction of his being the *Revealer*. Again, 3. We see, That the Evidence was so convincing as to bear down in them the Force of the *strongest Reasonings* and the *clearest Arguments* that stood against it, as we see evidently in the Case of *Abraham*, he is commanded to offer his Son *Isaac*. If this Command had not been impress'd on his Mind with an Evidence, That God was the *Revealer*, beyond what any Reasoning upon *Signs* and *Marks*, and I know not what, could pretend to, the strong plain Arguments that lay against it, strengthened by a Combination of the strongest natural Affections must have carry'd it. 4. If *Abraham* was convinc'd by such *Reasonings*, That God reveal'd this, that this Command was from God, is it not strange that he makes no Mention of them, when it was so obvious, That it was liable to be question'd whether God could give such a Command. But the Truth of it is, it is obvious to any one that thinks that nothing could prevail in this Case, but the *incontrollable* and *irresistible Evidence* resulting from the *very Impression*, whereby the Command was reveal'd. But to wave any further Consideration of this, which now we have no Experience of.

II. Mr. *Lock* will admit, That the *primitive Christians*, who embrac'd the *Gospel*, did it upon *sufficient objective Evidence*. He is not a *Christian* who denies it. But he will not admit *intuitive Evidence* in this Case. And I shall, I hope, afterwards make it appear, That it was not on the *Evidence* of such Reasonings, as Mr. *Lock* talks of, that they imbrac'd it.

III. The *Scriptures* demand our *Assent*, and offer no *Evidence* but this of *God's Authority*. And Arguments are not insisted on to prove, That it is God that speaks; God calls us not to assent without *objective Evidence*, and yet waves the Use of such Arguments as Mr. *Lock* would have to be the Foundation of our *Faith*. There must certainly be therefore some

some *objective Light* of a different Sort suppos'd, that must be the Ground of our *Assent*. And that there really is so, the *Scriptures* teach, as we shall see afterwards, when this *Proposition* must be proven, and explain'd more fully.

IV. Abstracting from what has been said, we have as good Ground as can be desir'd, and as the Nature of the Thing admits, for believing there is really a *Light* distinct from those mention'd by Mr. *Lock*. As to the Persons who have it, this *Light* evidences it self in the same Way as the other Sorts of *intellectual Light* do. They are conscious of it, and find it has the same Effect determining the Mind to assent, assuring it, and giving it Rest in the full Conviction of Truth. As to others who want it, They have such *Evidence* as a blind Man has, That there is such a Thing as *visible Evidence*. They have the concurring Suffrage of Persons sober, judicious and rational, who have given Evidence of the greatest Cautiousness in Guarding against Delusion, *Enthusiasm* and groundless Imaginations. Besides, the Effects peculiarly flowing from such a *Faith* as leans on this Foundation, gives Evidence to it. But I cannot stay to prove this further at present.

" IV. Tho' perhaps an Account every Way satisfying cannot be given
 " of the Nature of this *Light*, nor can we so clear what it is, and where-
 " in it consists, as to make those who are unacquaint with it; understand
 " it, or have as exact a Notion of it as they have, whose Experience
 " satisfys them as to its Reality: Yet such an Account may be given
 " of it, as may secure it against the Imputation of Unreasonableness, and
 " Unintelligibility. To this Purpose, I shall only observe the few
 " Things ensuing.

I. That *Light* or *objective Evidence*, whereon we are obliged to believe, and all that are subjectively enlightned to believe the *Scriptures*, and ground their *Assent*, is such, that a more intelligible Account by far may be given of it to those, who have no Experience of it, than can be given of the *objective Evidence* of visible Objects to Persons who have no Experience of Sight. To clear this,

II. It is to be observ'd, That in the Writings of Men, especially of some, who have any Peculiarity of Genius, and excel in any Kind, we find such Characters, Marks and peculiar Evidences of them, not only in the Matter, but in the Manner of Expression and Way of Delivering their Thoughts. There is such a Spirit, and somewhat so peculiar to themselves to be observ'd, that such as have any Notion of their Writings, cannot thereon avoid a Conviction, That this or that Book,
 tho'

tho' it bears not the Author's Name, or those other Marks, whereon we depend as to our Opinion of the Authors of Books, of whom we have no particular Acquaintance, is yet writ by such an Author, the Vestiges of whose peculiar Spirit and Genius run through, and are discernible in the Strain of the Book. There are few Men, who are acquainted with Books, and read them with Attention and Judgment, who have not the Experience of this. And hence we are frequently referr'd to this, as what may satisfy us, That Books that bear such Authors Names are genuine and truly theirs. And it is found more convincing than the Attestation of no incredible Witnesses in many Cases. Yet it must be confess'd, That Persons of the best Judgment, and most capable to express their Thoughts will find it difficult, if not impossible to express intelligibly wherein this *objective Evidence* consists: But that really it is there, that there is such a Thing, is impossible for them to question.

Though you had not nam'd the Author, &c. I could have both known, and avouched him. There is a Face of a Stile, by which we Scholars know one another, no less than our Persons by a visible Countenance. Bishop Hall, Pref. to Dr. Twiss, his doubting Conf. resolv'd Page 2.

III. If poor Men who differ infinitely less from one another, than the most exalted created *Being* can be supposed to do from God, do impart to the Product of their own Thoughts, and leave on their Writings such peculiar and discernible Characters of their own Genius and Spirit, as, at first View, upon the least serious Attention, convinces the Reader, That they are the Authors, and enables him to distinguish their Writings from others, is it not Reasonable to suppose, That a Book written by God, must carry on it a peculiar and distinguishing Impression of its Author, and that by so much the more certainly discernible; by any that has right Notions of him, as the Difference betwixt him and the most exalted humane Genius is infinitely greater, than that betwixt the most contemptible *Pamphlet-writer* and the most *elevate Scholar*? Nay, it is not impossible rationally to imagine the Contrary? Can we think, That he, who in all his Works, even in the meanest Insects, has left such *objective Evidence*, and such *Impressions* of himself, whereby he is certainly known to be the Author, has not left Impressions, more remarkable and distinguishing, on his *Word*, which he has magnified above all his Name, that is all the Means whereby he designs to make himself known, and which he design'd to be the principal

cipal Means of imparting the Knowledge of himself to Men, and that to the highest Purposes, their *Salvation* and *his own Glory*?

IV. This Impress, those Characters, Prints and Vestiges of the infinite Perfections of the *Deity*, that unavoidably must be allow'd to be stamp'd on, and shine, not meerly or only or principally, in the Matter, but in that as spoken or written, and in the Writings or Words, in their Stile, the Spirit running through them, the Scope, Tendency, &c. This *θεοπρεπεια* or God becoming Impress of *Majesty, Sovereignty, Omniscience, Independence, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Wisdom and Power*, is not only a sufficient & real, but in very Deed, the greatest *objective Light and Evidence* imaginable. And where one has an *Understanding given to know him that is True*, and is made thereby to intertain any suitable Notion of the *Deity*, upon Intuition of this *objective Evidence*, without waiting to reason on the Matter, his *Assent* will be carry'd, and unavoidably determin'd to rest on it as the highest Ground of *Assurance*. And this *Assent* founded on this Impress of the *Deity* in his own Word, is indeed an *Assent* of the highest Degree. And thus far *Faith* resembles our intuitive Knowledge, with this Difference, not as to the Manner of the Mind's Acting, but as to the Ability whence it acts; that in our intuitive Knowledge, as Mr. Lock, and those of his Opinion, restricts it, the Evidence or *objective Light* is such as not only is immediately without Reasoning discern'd, but such as lies open to, and is discernible by our Understandings, without any *subjective Light*, any Work of the Spirit of God either repairing our disabled Faculties, or elevating, and guiding them to the due Observation, or fixing their Attention, or freeing their Minds of the Power and present Influence of Aversion of *Will*, Disorder of *Affections*, and Prejudices that obstruct the discerning Power. Whereas this is really necessary in this Case, and tho' the *objective Evidence* is great, and still the same; yet according to the greater or lesser Degree of this Assistance, our *Assent* must be stronger or weaker, more fix'd or wavering.

V. When this *objective Evidence* is actually observant to, and under the View of the *Mind* thus enabl'd, dispos'd and assisted, there doth arise from it, and there is made by it, an Impression on the whole Soul corresponding thereto. The beaming of God's sovereign Authority awes Conscience. The piercing Evidence of his *Omniscience* increases that Regard, the View of *Goodness, Mercy, Love and Grace* operates on the *Will*, and leaves a Relish on the *Affections*, and this truly resembles *sensible Evidence*, tho' it is of spiritual Things, and of a spiritual Nature; nor

nor is it, as it is *Evidence*, inferiour to, but upon many Accounts preferable to that which results from the *Impression* made by *sensible Objects*. And this, as was observ'd of the former, is also greater or less, according, and in Proportion unto the View we have of that *objective Light* above-mention'd. This *self-evidencing Power* is a Resultancy from, and in Degree keeps Pace with that *self-evidencing Light*.

VI. The Effects wrought on the Soul are such, many of them, as not only are most discernible in the Time, but likewise do remain on the Soul, some of them *ever after*, many of them for a long Tract of Time, and in their Nature, are such, as evidently tend to the Perfecting of our Faculties, are suitable to them, and for their Improvement, even according to what unprejudic'd and sober Reason determines, as to that wherein the Defects of our Faculties, and their Perfection consists. And the Reality of those Effects, whereof the Mind is inwardly conscious, appears to the Conviction of Beholders, in their Influence upon the Persons Deportment before the World. And,

VII. Hence it is, That though our Conviction neither needs, nor is founded on *Reasonings*; yet from those Effects Ground is given, and Matter offer'd for a rational & argumentative Confirmation of our *Assent*, and the Grounds thereof, and the Validity of it for our own Confirmation, when that *Evidence* which first gave Ground for our *Faith*, and wherein it rests, is not actually under View, as also for the Conviction of others.

VIII. This *Evidence* is such, as indeed challenges, and is a sufficient Bottom for an *Assent* of the *highest Degree*. And indeed the Saints of God, and that even of the meanest Condition, and who have been under the most manifest Disadvantages, both as to *Capacity* and *Education*, with the like Occasions of Improvement, upon this Bottom have reach'd *Faith*, comprizing *Assurance* without Doubt, even that *full Assurance of Faith*, yea the *Riches of the full Assurance of Understanding*, as has been evident by the Effects in *Death* and *Life*, of which we have notable Instances not a few in *Heb. 11.* throughout, both in *Adversity* and *Prosperity*, *Life* and *Death*.

“ V. I observe, That this *Light or objective Evidence* whereon *Faith* is bottom'd, has no Affinity with, but is at the furthest Remove from “ *enthusiastick Impulse*, or *Imaginations*.

I. This is not a Perswasion without Reason. Here is the strongest Reason, and the *Assent* hereon past leans upon the most pregnant *Evidence*.

II. It carries no Contradiction to our *Faculties*, but influences them, each in a Way suitable to its Nature and Condition.

III. Yea more, none of our *Faculties* in their due Use do contradict, or at least disprove it. Whereas *enthusiastick Impressions* are irrational.

IV. This is not a Perswasion, nor a Ground for it without, or contrary to the *Word*, but it is the *Evidence* of the *Word* it self, that by it we are directed to attend to, and improve.

V. Yea it is what our other *Faculties* in their due Use will give a consequential Confirmation to, as we have heard. Wherefore,

VI. Mr. *Lock* shall be allow'd to run down *Enthusiasm* as much as he pleaseth, and Perswasions whereof no Reason can be given, but that we are strongly perswaded, or not to give Credit to those that can say no more for themselves, but we see or feel, &c. But these Things as deliver'd by Mr. *Lock*, need some Cautions. As, 1. A Perswasion whereof no Reason can be given, is certainly not Faith but Fancy: But a Perswasion, whereof he that hath it, through Weakness, cannot give an Account, may be solid. 2. A Perswasion may be solid, of which he that hath it, cannot give another Evidence of the same Kind he hath himself. It is enough that Proof of another Sort, & sufficient in its Kind, is offer'd. 3. If one says, He sees and he feels, this may be satisfying to him, tho' he cannot give any distinct Account of the Evidence he hath. And that he cannot thus account for the Nature of Things that are within him, concludes not against the Reality and Truth of what he has the Experience: But his Experience is not Ground of Conviction to others, unless other Proofs are offer'd. A Man of a shallow Capacity, destitute of Education, might be convicted of *Enthusiasm* by a subtile blind Man, to whom he cannot for his Seeing give an Evidence of the same Kind, nor open the Nature of visible Evidence, nor give any other Proof, That he is not mistaken, but that he sees, and yet he is not mistaken, assents not without Reason, and has no Ground to call in Question what he sees, but may and will securely laugh at all the blind Man's Quirks, and tell him, he is blind. The Case is parallel. We must not by this atheistical Scare-crow be frightened out of our Faith and Experience.

“ VI. That many read the Scriptures, without discerning any Thing of this Light, is no Argument against it. For,

I. Many want that supernatural Ability, that Understanding whereby God is known, whereby Christ's Sheep know his Voice from that of a Stranger, and so not being of God, they cannot hear his Words.

II. Many

II. Many want, and are utterly destitute of any tolerable Notions of God: It is impossible such should discern what is suitable to him.

III. Many have perverse Notions of God riveted on their Minds, and that both among the Learn'd and Unlearn'd, and finding the Scripture not suited to, but contrary to those false preconceiv'd Impressions, they look on it as Foolishness.

IV. Many want that humble Frame of Spirit, which has the Promise of *Divine Teaching*; *The Meek he guides in the Way*. It is they who are Fools in their own Eyes, who get Wisdom.

V. Many are proud and conceited deeply, and no Wonder then that they know nothing.

VI. Many have the *Vanity of their Minds uncur'd*, and so hunt after vain Things, and fix not in Observation of what is solid, and thereby *their foolish Hearts are hardn'd*, and *their Minds darkn'd* and diverted.

VII. Not a few are under the Power of prevailing Lusts, disorder'd Affections, and out of Favour to them they are so far from desiring an Increase of Knowledge, that on the Contrary, *they like not to retain God in their Knowledge*. What they already know, is uneasy to them, because contrary to their Lusts, and therefore they would be rid of it.

VIII. Many there are that despise the Spirit of God, reject his Operations, seek not after him, condemn him: And no Wonder such as refuse the Guide, lose their Way.

IX. Many for those and other Sins, are judicially left of God to the *God of this World, who blinds the Minds of them that believe not*.

X. Many never attempt to do his Will, and so no Wonder they come not to a Discerning whether the Word spoken and written is of God. And if all these Things are consider'd, we shall be so far from questioning the Truth, because many see not the *Evidence*, That *this very Blindness* will be an Argument to prove the Truth of it, and a strong Evidence of the Need of it, and of *supernatural Power* to believe it.

Finally, Persons sober and attentive want not some darker Views of this *Evidence*, which may and should draw on to wait for more. And I take the honourable Concessions, in Favours of the Scriptures, made by Adversaries, to have proceeded from some fainter View of this Sort.

Thus I have considered the Force of what I find pleaded by Mr. Lock; stated,

stated the Question, cleared in some Measure our Opinion as it stands oppos'd to that of the *Rationalists*, assign'd an intelligible Notion of the *Reason of Faith*, and shew'd it to be such as the Meanest are capable of, and such as is propos'd to all who are oblig'd to believe the Scriptures, whereas these *historical Proofs* are above the Reach of Thousands, and were never heard of by innumerable Multitudes, who, on Pain of Damnation, are oblig'd to receive the Scriptures as the *Word of God*.

IV. Having in our third *Observation* overthrown the Ground of Mr. *Lock's* Opinion, we now are to clear, That what Mr. *Lock* builds on, it must of Course fall, as particularly what he tells us, *Lib. 4. Cap. 18. Par. 6. Pag. 584.* "That they, who make *Revelation* alone the sole Object of *Faith*, cannot say, That it is a Matter of *Faith*, and not of Reason, to believe, That such or such a Proposition, to be found in such or such a Book, is of *Divine Inspiration*; unless it be reveal'd, That that Proposition, or all in that Book was communicated by *Divine Inspiration*. And he goes on telling us, That without such a particular *Revelation*, assuring us of this, That this Proposition is by *Divine Inspiration*, it can never be Matter of *Faith*, but Matter of Reason to assent to it.

What Mr. *Lock* designs by this Discourse, I know not; unless he meant to put us under a Necessity to prove every Proposition of the Scripture to be of *Divine Inspiration*, before we believe what it exhibits. And if this is what he intends, he overthrows the *Christian Religion* intirely, at least as to its Use and Advantage to the Generality. But waving what further might be observ'd; I shall only animadvert a little upon that one Assertion, "That our Belief, That this or that Proposition is from God, is not an Act of *Faith*, but of Reason. As to which I say,

I. If Mr. *Lock* design'd no more but this, That the mention'd Assent to the Scripture Propositions, is an Act of, and subjected in our *rational, or intellectual Faculty*, it might well be admitted. Or,

II. If Mr. *Lock* meant, That this Assent is agreeable to the Nature of our Minds, that is, That it is not really contrary to the true Principles of Reason, nor such as proceeds without such Grounds, as the Nature of our Understandings require for founding an Assent, we should admit, That in this Sense, it is an Act of Reason, that is, a *rational Act*, as not only being elicited by our Understandings, but depending on such a Reason or Ground, as the Nature of the intellectual Power requires,

requires, and which must alway be consistent with our certain Knowledge. But,

III. Neither of these being intended, we cannot go along with Mr. *Lock* in what he Means by this Expression, *That our Belief of Scripture Propositions, is an Act of Reason*, that is, an *Assent* not built upon *Divine Testimony*, but on such other Arguings and Reasonings, as we can find out for proving that God reveal'd it. Because we say, and shall afterwards prove, That the Scriptures do evidence themselves to be from God, in that Way above-express'd, and afterwards to be explain'd and confirm'd, which we hope shall be done in such Sort, as may effectually repel the Force of what Mr. *Lock* has pleaded in Opposition to the Scriptures, and shew, That there is no Reason for ranking all the Truths therein delivered amongst those conjectural Things that lean only on Probabilities and Reasonings from them, which Mr. *Lock* evidently does, while he sinks *traditional Revelation* as to the Point of Certainty below our *intuitive, rational and sensible Knowledge*; and banishes all *Faith*, properly so call'd, out of the World, leaving no Room for it, and substituting in its Place an *Act of Reason*, proceeding upon *Probabilities*, that is, on *historical Proofs*, which he reckons only among *Probabilities*; nor do I blame him for this last, tho' perhaps some Things he has offer'd on this Head, might be excepted against; but this is not my Business.

I. The Question amounts to this in short, "Whereas the Scriptures, wherever they come, oblige all to whom they are offer'd, to receive them not as the *Word of Man*, but, as indeed they are, the *Word of God*; upon what Ground. 1. *Thes.* 2. 13. or formal Reason is it, that we assent thus unto them, and receive them as the *Word of God*, to his Glory and our Salvation, in Compliance with our Duty?

In Answer to this important Query, I shall offer what upon a Review of former Experience, Consideration of the Scriptures, and what others, especially that judicious and profound Divine Dr. *Owen*, in these two Treatises he has writ on this Subject, have writ on this Head, appears satisfying to me: And this I shall do in the few following Propositions which I shall, with as much Brevity and Perspicuity as I can, lay down, explain, and shortly confirm with some few Arguments.

“ That *Faith* whereby we assent unto, and receive the Word of God, to his Glory and our Salvation, is *Faith Divine* and *Supernatural*.

I. **T** Here are at this Day, who teach, That whatever *Faith* is this Day to be found amongst Men, is built upon, and resolv'd into the *Testimony* of Men. And therefore it will be necessary to insist a little in confirming and explaining of this important Truth.

II. To clear this we observe, That the *Understanding*, or that *Faculty*, *Power* or *Ability* of the Soul of Man, whereby we perceive, and assent unto Truths upon their proper Evidence, may be distinguish'd or branch'd into diverse subordinate *Powers*, in Respect of the different Truths to which it assents. 1. We have an *Ability* of assenting unto the *self-evident Maxims* of Reason, such as that, *The same Thing, at the same Time, cannot be, and not be*, upon their own *self-Evidence*, without any other Argument, than a bare Proposal of them in Terms we understand. 2. We have an *Ability* to assent unto other Truths, upon Conviction of their Truth by Arguments, drawn from the fore-mentioned *self-evident Truths*, or any other acknowledg'd or own'd by us. 3. We have an *Ability* to assent unto Truths, upon the Evidence of the *Testimony* of *credible Witnesses*, or Persons worthy to be believ'd, and of deserving Credit. This *Ability*, and the Assent given by it to such Truths, upon such *Testimony*, are both call'd by the same common Name, *Faith*.

III. *Faith* then is that *Power* or *Ability* of the Mind of Man, whereby he is capable of receiving, and actually assents unto Truths upon the Evidence of the *Testimony* of Persons worthy of Credit, who know what they testify, and will not deceive us. Now whereas the Person giving this *Testimony*, is either God, Men or Angels good or bad, *Faith* may be consider'd as either *Divine*, *Humane* or *Angelical*. This last, as of no Consideration to our Purpose, we shall lay aside. *Faith*, or that *Ability*, whereby we assent to the *Testimony* of Men worthy of Credit, is call'd *Humane Faith*. And that whereby we assent to Truths upon the Evidence of the *Testimony* of God, who cannot lie, is called *Divine Faith*.

IV. *Divine Faith* is that *Power*, or *Ability* whereby we assent unto, and

and receive *Truths* propos'd to us upon Evidence of the *Word* or *Testimony* of God, to our own Salvation, in Compliance with our Duty, to the Glory of God.

V. In this Account of *Divine Faith*, we add, in Compliance with our Duty, to the Glory of God, and our own Salvation, because Devils and Men may yield some Assent unto *Truths*, upon the Evidence of God's *Testimony*, which neither answers their Duty, nor turns to the Glory of God in their Salvation, of which we do not now design to speak, and therefore by this Clause have cut it off, and laid it aside, as not belonging that *Faith* whereof we now speak, and whereby we conceive all, to whom the Scriptures come, are oblig'd to receive them.

VI. This *Faith* now describ'd may be call'd *Divine, & Supernatural*, and really is so on two Accounts, 1. Because this Ability is wrought in them, in whom it is found, by the *Divine* and *Supernatural Power* of God. 2. Because it builds not its Perswasion of, yields not its Assent unto the *Truths* it receives upon any *humane Authority* or *Testimony*; but upon the *Testimony of God*, who can neither be ignorant of any Truth, deceiv'd, or deceive us.

VII. It now remains, That we confirm this Proposition that we have thus shortly explain'd. And this we shall do by its several Parts. First then, We assert, *That this Faith is wrought in these, who have it, by the Power of God.* Now for clearing this, we shall only hint at the Heads of a few Arguments, leaving the further Proof to *polemick Treatises*. 1. This Ability to believe and receive the Things of God to our Salvation and his Glory, is in Scripture expressly deny'd to *natural* or *unrenew'd Men*. 2. *Thes.* 3. 2. " All Men have not Faith, 1. *Cor.* 2. 14.--- The natural Man receiveth " not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness unto " him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discern'd. *Joh.* 8. 47.--- Ye therefore hear not God's Words, because " ye are not of God. 2. This is expressly deny'd to be of *our selves*, and asserted a *Supernatural Gift* of God: *Eph.* 2. 8. By Grace are ye sav'd through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God. 3. The Production of it is ascrib'd unto God. He it is that fulfils in his People the *Work of Faith with Power*. 2. *Thes.* 1. 11. He it is that gives them, that is, that enables them, on the Behalf of Christ, to believe and suffer for his Name, *Philip.* Chap. 1. 29. It's one of the *Fruits* produc'd by the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 22. and of it Christ is the Author. *Heb.* 12. 2.

VIII. We are next shortly to prove, *That this Faith builds its Perswasion on the Testimony of God*, evidencing it self such unto the Mind, and not

on humane Testimony. 1. It is in Scripture expressly said not to stand in the Wisdom of Men. 1. Cor. 2. 5, that is, it leans not on the Word, Authority, Eloquence or Reasonings of Men. 2. It is expressly in that same Verse, said to stand in the Power of God, that is, as the foregoing Words compar'd with v. 13 explain it, in the Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and which he demonstrates or evidences by his Power, accompanying them, to be the Word of God. 3. It is describ'd in such a Way as fully clears this; it's held forth as a receiving of the Word, not as the Word of Man, but as it is indeed the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe, 1. Thes. 2. 13. many other Proofs might be added, but this is sufficient to answer our Purpose.

IX. We shall next shortly prove, "That we are oblig'd in Duty thus to believe the Scriptures, or to receive them as the Word of God, and not of Men. 1. The Scriptures are indeed, and hold forth themselves every where as the Word of God. Heb. 5. 12. 2. Pet. 1. 20, 21. 2. Tim. 3. 16. Mar. 12. 36. They are the Oracles of God, which holy Men of God spake by the Motion of the Spirit of God, and wrote by Divine Inspiration, and the Holy Ghost speaks to us by them. Now when God utters Oracles, Acts 1. 16. Acts 28. 25. Heb. 3. 7. speaks, writes and utters his Mind to us, we are in Duty oblig'd and bound to assent to what he says, and yield what Obedience he requires. This the very Light of Nature teacheth. 2. The Scriptures were written for this very End, That we might believe, and that believing we might have Life, Joh. 20. 30, 31. The Scriptures of the Prophets (which contain the Revelation of the Mystery of God's Will, otherwise not known) according to the Commandment of the Everlasting G O D, are made known unto all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, Rom. 16. 25, 26. Again the Scriptures are term'd a more sure Word of Prophecy than the Voice from Heaven, and Men are said to do well, to take heed to them, 2. Pet. 1. toward the Close. That is, it is their Duty to take heed to them or believe them. 3. The most dreadful Judgments are threatn'd against those who receive not the Word of God from the Prophets or Apostles, whether by Word or Writ, is all one. "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that House or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the Day of Judgement, than for that City, Matth. 10. 14, 15. Accordingly we find the Apostles preach the Word at Antioch in Pisidia.

dia, Act. 13; demand Acceptance of it both of Jews and Gentiles; and upon their Refusal they testify against them in the Way of the Lord's Appointment, v. 51. Tho' so far as we can learn, they there wrought no Miracle to confirm their Mission. 4. We have above heard the Apostle commending the *Thessalonians* for receiving the Word as the Word of God, and not of Man. 1. Thes. 2. 13. which sufficiently shews that it was their Duty.

X. Whereas some may here say, *How can it be our Duty to believe the Word of God, since it has been above prov'd, That we are not able of our selves thus to do it.* I answer briefly, 1. The very Light of Nature requires perfect Obedience of us; and yet we are not able to yield it. 2. The Scriptures plainly require, Heb. 12. 28. *That we serve God acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear*, and yet we must have Grace whereby to do it. 3. We have destroy'd our selves, Hos. 13. 9. and that through this, our Faith or natural Ability of believing Truths upon Testimony, is so impair'd and weakn'd, and by Prejudices so obstructed otherwise, that we are not able to discern the Evidence of God's Authority in his Word, nor assent thereon to his Testimony in a due Manner, yet this cannot prejudice reasonably God's Right to demand Credit to his Word, whereon he has impress'd such Prints of his Authority, as are sufficiently obvious to any ones Faith, that is not thus faultily deprav'd. 4. We have therefore no Reason to question God, who gave us Eyes, which we have put out, but to blame our selves, and aim to do his Will, that is wait on him in all the Ways of his own Appointment; and we have no Reason to despair, but that in this Way we may have graciously given of God's Sovereign Grace, an Understanding to know whether these Truths are of God, or they who spoke them did it of themselves. Tho' we cannot claim this as what is our due.

Thus we have in some Measure clear'd what that Faith is, whereby the Scriptures must be believ'd to the Glory of God and our own Salvation, and confirm'd shortly our Account of it from the Scriptures of Truth. We now proceed to

P R O P. II.

“ The Reason for which we are oblig’d in Duty to believe or receive
 “ the Scriptures as the *Word of God*, is not, *That God has by his Spirit*
 “ *wrought Faith in us, or given us this Ability thus to receive them.*

THis Proposition we have offer’d, because some do blame *Protestants* for saying; whereas none of them really do it. Nor can any Man reasonably say it. For clearing this observe,

I. It is indeed true, That we cannot believe them, unless God give us this gracious *Ability* or *Faith* to believe them, and by his holy Spirit remove our natural Darkness, and clear our Minds of those *Prejudices* against his Word, wherewith naturally they are fill’d.

II. Yet this is not the Reason wherefore we do assent unto, or receive the Scriptures; for, it were impertinent, if any should ask, *Upon what Account do ye believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God?* to answer, *I believe it, because God has wrought the Faith of it in me.* This is not to tell wherefore we do believe, but to tell how we came to be furnish’d with *Power* or *Ability* to believe.

P R O P. III.

“ We are not to believe the Scriptures, upon the *Authority* of any Man
 “ or Church. Or the Reason wherefore we are in Duty bound thus
 “ to assent to, or receive the Scriptures as the *Word of God*, is not,
 “ *That any Man, or Church, says so.*

THis is fully demonstrate by our Writers against the *Papists*. For Confirmation of it, it is sufficient to our Purpose at present to observe,

I. That to believe, That the *Scriptures are the Word of God*, because such a Man, or Church says so, answers not our Duty. Our Duty is to believe God speaking to us, upon the Account of his own *Veracity*; and not because Men say, This is his Word. This is not
 2 Chr. 20. 20. to believe God and his Prophets for the Sake of their own *Testimony*, but for the *Authority* of Men.

II. The *Faith* that leans upon this *Testimony*, is built not on the *Tru*

of God; but on the *Testimony of Men*, who may be deceiv'd and deceive:
All Men are Liars.

III. We have no where in the *Word* this propos'd as the Ground, whereon, in Duty, we are oblig'd to believe the *Scriptures*.

IV. The Church; and what she says, is to be tried by the *Word*, and her *Testimony* is so far only to be receiv'd as the *Word* consents: And therefore we cannot make this the Ground of our *Faith*, without a scandalous Circle, which the Church of Rome can never clear her self of.

But I need insist no further on this Head. That Church which only claims this Regard to her *Testimony*, is long since become so well known, and so fully convicted of manifold Falshoods, that her *Testimony* rather prejudices than helps to confirm whatever it is engag'd for.

P R O P. IV.

"The *rational Arguments* whereby the Truth of the *Christian Religion*
"is evinc'd and demonstrate against *Atheists*, though they are many
"Ways useful, yet are not the Ground, or Reason, whereon in a
"Way of Duty, all who have the *Scriptures* propos'd to them, are
"oblig'd to believe and receive them as the Word of God.

THESE moral and rational Considerations are, and may be many Ways useful to stop the Mouths of Enemies, to beget in them, who yet are unacquaint with the true intrinsick Worth of the *Word*, some Value for it, and engage them to consider it, to relieve them that do believe, against Objections, and strengthen their *Faith*. This is allow'd to them; and is sufficient in this loose and atheistical Age, to engage Persons of all Sorts, who value the *Scriptures*, to study them. But yet it is not upon them that the *Faith* requir'd of us, as to the *Divine Authority of the Scriptures* is to be founded. For,

I. These are indeed a proper Foundation for a rational *Assent*, such as is given upon moral Proof or Demonstration. And they are able to beget a strong moral Perswasion of this Truth. But this *Assent*, which they beget, cannot, in any Propriety of Speech, be call'd *Faith*, either Divine or humane. For *Faith* is an *Assent* upon Testimony.

II. The *Faith* that is requir'd of us, is requir'd to be founded not on the *Wisdom of Men*, that is the Reason. 1 Cor. 2. 5.

sonings or Arguings of Men. Now this leans only and entirely on these.

III. This *Faith* is, in Way of Duty, requir'd of many. Many are in Duty oblig'd to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word* of God, to whom these *Arguments* were never offer'd: The Apostles never made use of them; and yet requir'd their Hearers to receive and believe their *Word*.

IV. This *Faith* many are oblig'd to, who are not capable of understanding or reaching the Force of these *Arguments*.

P R O P. V.

" The *Faith* of the *Scriptures* Divine Authority is not founded on this,
 " That they by whom they were written, did, by *Miracles*, prove
 " they were sent of God.

I Need not spend much Time in clearing this. It will sufficiently confirm it to observe,

I. That many are, and were in Duty oblig'd to yield this *Assent* to, and believe the *Scriptures*, who saw not these *Miracles*.

II. We are no other Way sure of these *Miracles* being wrought, than by the *Testimony* of the *Word*.

III. This Way is not countenanc'd by the *Word*: For it no where teaches us to expect *Miracles* as the Ground of our *Assent*, but upon the Contrary declares, That the *Word* of *Moses* and the *Prophets* is sufficient to lay a Foundation for *Faith*, without any new *Miracle*.

Luk. 16. 31.

P R O P. VI.

" The *Reason* whereon, in Duty, we are bound to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word* of God, is not any private *Voice*, *Whisper* or
 " *Suggestion* from the Spirit of God, separate and distinct from the
 " written *Word*, saying in our Ear, or suggesting to our Mind,
 " The *Scriptures* are the *Word* of God.

THere is no need to insist long in Proof of this. For,

I. Many are bound to believe the *Word* of God, to whom never any such *Testimony* was given: But no Man is bound to receive the *Scriptures*

Scripture, to whom the Ground whereon he is bound to believe them, is not propos'd.

II. There is no where in the Word, any Ground given for any such *Testimony*. Nor doth the Experience of any of the Lord's People witness, That they are acquaint with any such Suggestion. And besides, the Question might again be mov'd concerning this Suggestion, *Wherefore do ye believe this to be the Testimony of God?*

P R O P. VII.

" That whereon all, to whom the *Word* of God comes, are bound to receive it with the *Faith* above describ'd, is not any particular *Word* of the *Scripture* bearing Testimony to all the Rest. As for Instance, " It is not meerly or primarily upon this Account, that I am bound " to receive all the written Word as the Word of God, because the " *Scripture* says, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.*

This is very plain upon many Accounts, some of which I shall shortly offer.

I. We had been oblig'd to believe the *Scripture* with *Faith Supernatural*, though these Testimonys had been left out. Yea they who had them not, were oblig'd to believe the *Word* of God.

II. These have no more Evidence of their being from God, than other Places of *Scripture*: And therefore we are not to believe the *Scriptures*, meerly on their *Testimony*: But have the same Reason to receive with *Faith* as the *Word* of God, every Part of the *Scripture* as well as these *Testimonys*.

P R O P. VIII.

" The Reason why we are bound, with *Faith Supernatural* and *Divine*, to " receive the *Word* of God, is not, That the Things therein reveal'd, " or the Matters of the *Scriptures* is suitable unto the Apprehensions, " which Men naturally have of God, themselves and other Things, " and congruous to the Interests, Necessitys, Desires and Capacitys " of Men.

I shall not spend Time in overthrowing this which some seem fond of, only for Confirming the Proposition observe,

I. This

I. This Suitableness of the Matter unto the *Apprehensions*, or *natural Notions* of Men concerning God, themselves and other Things, &c. as discern'd by Men unrenew'd, and made out by their Reasonings, is not a Ground for *Faith* or an *Assent to Testimony*, but for a *Perswasion* of another Sort.

II. There are many Things reveal'd in the *Scripture*, which are to any meer natural Man no Way capable of this Character. No Man receives, or can reasonably receive on this Account, the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, and the like. It is true, these are not contrary to our Reason: But it is likewise true, they have no such *evident Congruity* to the *Notions* our Reason suggests of God, as should engage us to receive the Discovery as from God; yea on the Contrary, there is a seeming Inconsistency that has startled many.

P R O P. IX.

“ When therefore it is enquired, Wherefore do ye believe, and by *Faith*
 “ rest in the *Scriptures* as the *Word of God*, and not of Man? We do
 “ not answer, It is because God has given us an *Ability* so to do;
 “ because the Church says, It is the *Word of God*; because there are
 “ many strong *moral Arguments* proving it so; because they who
 “ wrote it, wrought *Miracles*; because God has by some *Voice* whis-
 “ per'd in our Ear, or secretly suggested it to us, That this is the *Word*
 “ of God; or because there are *particular Scriptures* which bear Wit-
 “ ness to all the rest that they are of God; nor finally, because the
 “ *Matter therein reveal'd*, seems worthy of God to our Reason.

THIS is the Sum of what has been hitherto clear'd: And the Reasons offer'd conclude against all these, whether we take them separately or conjunctly. They prove, That not one of them, nor all taken together, are the *formal Reason* whereon we are oblig'd to believe the *Word of God*, or receive it with *Faith Supernatural* and *Divine*.

P R O P. X.

“ The *formal Reason* or *Ground* whereon I assent to, or receive the whole
 “ *Scriptures*, and every *particular Truth* in them, and am oblig'd in Duty
 “ so to do, is, The *Authority* and *Truth* of God speaking in them, and
 “ speaking every *Truth* they contain, evidencing it self to my *Faith*,
 “ when

“ when duly exercis’d about them, and attending to them, by their
 “ own *Divine* and *distinguishing Light* and *Power*. Or when it is en-
 “ quir’d, Wherefore do ye *believe, receive, assent to, and rest in the*
 “ *Scriptures as indeed the Word of God, and not of Man?* I answer, I do
 “ believe them, because they carry in them, to my *Faith*, an *Evi-*
 “ *dence of God*, or do evidence themselves by their own *Light* and
 “ *Power* to my *Faith*, duly exercis’d about them, That they are the
 “ *Word of God, and not of Man*.

Now for explaining this, which is the Assertion that contains the *Truth* principally intended, I shall offer the few following Remarks;

I. However great the *Evidence* of God in the Word is, yet it cannot, nor is it requisite that it should, determine any to receive and assent to it, whose *Faith* and *Ability* of believing is not duly dispos’d: Though the Sun shine never so clearly; yet he that has no Eyes, or whose Eyes are vitiate, and under any total darkning Indisposition, sees it not. No Wonder then, that they, who have not naturally, and to whom God has not yet, by *Supernatural Grace*, given Eyes to see, Ears to hear, or Hearts to perceive, discern not the *Evidence* of God’s *Authority* and *Truth* in the Word.

II. Albeit there really may be in any an *Ability*, or *Faith* capable of discerning this *Evidence*; yet if that *Faith* is not exercis’d, and duly apply’d to the Consideration of the *Word*, whereon this *Evidence* is impress’d, he cannot assent unto, or believe it in a due Manner, to the Glory of God, his own Salvation, and according to his Duty. There is *Evidence* sufficient in many *moral, metaphysical* and *mathematical Truths*: And yet Abundance of Persons, who are sufficiently capable of it, do not assent unto these *Truths*, nor discern this *Evidence*; not because it is wanting, but because they do not apply their Minds to the Observation of it in a due Way. God has not imparted such an *Evidence* to his *Word*, as the Light of the Sun has, which forces an Acknowledgment of it self upon any, whose Eyes are not wilfully shut: But designing to put us to Duty, he has imparted such *Evidence*, as they, who have Eyes to see, if according to Duty they apply their Minds, may discern, and be satisfi’d by.

III. This *Light* and *Power* evidencing the *Divine Authority* of the *Scriptures*, is really impress’d upon every Truth, or every Word which God speaks to us, especially as it stands in its own Place, related to, and

connected with the other Parts of the *Scripture*, whereto it belongs. But of this more anon.

IV. When to the Question, *Wherefore, or on what Grounds do I assent to the Scriptures as indeed the Word of God, and not of Man*, it is answer'd, I do it, because it *evidences it self* God's Word by its own *Light* or *Power*. There is no Place for that captious Question, How know ye this *Light* and *Power* to be *Divine*, or from God? For, it is of the Nature of all *Light*, *external* and *sensible*, or *internal* and *mental*, (anent which two it is hard to determine which of them is *properly*, and which only *metaphorically, Light*) that it not only clears to the Mind other Things discernible by it, but satisfies the Mind about it self, proportionably to the Degree of its Clearness. The *Light* of the Sun discovers sensible Objects, and satisfys us so fully about it self, that we need have Recourse to no new Argument to convince us that we have this *Light*, and that it is real. In like Manner the *Evidence* of any *mathematical Truth*, not only quiets us about the Truth, but makes the Mind rest assured about it self. And so the *Divine Light* and *Power* of the *Word*, not only satisfies our Minds, as to those Truths they are design'd of God to discover, but, in Proportion to the Degree of *Light* in them, or convey'd by them, satisfy the Mind about this *Light* or *Power*, That it is *Truth* and is *no Lie*. Nor is there need for any other Argument to convince a Mind affected with this, of it. It is true, if a blind Man should say to me, How know ye that the Sun shines, and ye see it? I would answer, I know it by the *Evidence* of its own *Light* affecting mine Eyes: And if he should further say, But how prove ye to me, That ye are not deluded, that really it is so? Then I would be oblig'd to produce other Arguments whereof he is capable: But then it must be allow'd that the *Evidence* of these Arguments is not so great as the *Evidence* I my self have of it by its own *Light*; tho' they may be more convincing to him. And further, this is not to convince my self, but to satisfy him, and free my Mind from the Disturbance of his Objections: In like Manner, if one, that denys the *Scriptures*, shall say, Wherefore do ye believe or rest in the *Scriptures* as the *Word of God*? I answer, I do it, because they evidence themselves to my Mind, by their own *Light*, or *Power*, to be of God: If he shall say, I cannot discern this. I answer, It's because your Mind is darkned, ye want Eyes, or have them shut: If he shall further urge, That my *Light* is not *real*, I will prove it by Arguments, which may stop his Mouth, and be more convincing to him than my Assertion, which is all that hitherto he has, but yet these Arguments

guments are not that whereon my Mind rests satisfi'd as to the *Truth*; though they may be of great Use, not only to convince him, but to relieve my Mind against such subtle Sophisms, as he might make use of, which, though they could not perswade me out of the Sight of my Eyes, or the Evidence shining to my Mind, yet troubled me how to answer them, and at Times, when, through my Inadvertency, or Indisposition of my Eyes, or through Clouds overspreading and interposing betwixt this *Light* and me, these Objections might shake me a little.

V. Considering we are but renew'd in Part, and our *Faith* is imperfect, and liable to many Defects, the *Ministry* of the *Church* is of manifold Necessity and Use, to awaken us to attend this *Light*, to cure the the Indispositions of our Minds, to hold up this *Light* to us, to point out and explain the Truths it discovers, whereby our Minds are made more sensible of the Evidence of this *Light*. And upon many other Accounts of an alike Nature, are the Ordinances necessary, and through the Efficacy of the Divine Ordination and Appointment, useful for establishing our Minds, naturally sluggish, dark, weak and unstable, and which are expos'd to manifold Temptations, in the *Faith* of the *Scriptures*.

VI. In Order to our holding fast our *Faith*, and being stable in it, besides this *outward Ministry*, and the *inward Work* of the Holy Ghost, giving us an Understanding to discern this *Evidence*, and besides the foremention'd Use of the *moral Arguments* above-mention'd; besides all these to our *Believing* and *Persevering*, in a due Manner, in the *Faith* of the *Scriptures*, we stand in need of the daily Influences of the Spirit of God, to strengthen our *Faith* or *Ability* of discerning spiritual Things, to clear our Minds of Prejudices, and incidental Indispositions, to seal the Truths on our Minds, and give us refreshing Tastes of them, and confirm us many Ways against Opposition.

VII. This *Light*, whereby the *written Word* evidences it self unto the Minds of those who have spiritual Ears to hear, and apply them, is nothing else, save the *Impress* of the *Majesty*, *Truth*, *Omniscience*, *Wisdom*, *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Grace*, *Mercy* and *Authority* of God, stamp'd upon the *Scriptures* by the Holy Ghost, and beaming or shining into the Minds of such Persons upon their Hearing or Perusal, and affecting them with a Sense of these Perfections, both in what is spoken, and in the *Majestick* and *God-becoming* Way of Speaking: They speak as never *Man* spake; the Matter spoken, and the Manner of Speaking, has a Greatness discernible by a spiritual Understanding, that satisfies it fully, That Go

is the Speaker. And all the Impressions of God's *Wisdom, Faithfulness, Omniscience* and *Majesty*, that are stamp'd upon the Matter contain'd in the *Scriptures* being convey'd only by the *Word*, do join the Impressions that are upon the *Word*, and strengthen the *Evidence* they give of their *Divine Original*, since these *Impressions* do not otherwise appear to our Minds, or affect them, than by the *Word*. The *Word*, by a *God-becoming Manifestation* of the Truth, that scorns all these little and mean Arts of *Insinuation*, by fair and enticing Words, and artificially dress'd up Argumentations, with other the like Confessions of humane Weakness, that are in all humane Writings, commends it self to the Conscience, dives into the Souls of Men, into all the secret Recesses of their Hearts, guides, teaches, directs, determines and judges in them, and upon them, in the *Name, Majesty* and *Authority* of God. And when it enters thus into the Soul, it fills it with the *Light of the Glory* of the Beamings of those *Perfections* upon it; whereby it's made to cry out, *The Voice of God, and not of Man*.

VIII. This *Power*, whereby the *Word* evidences it self to be the *Word* of God and not of Man, is nothing else save that *Authority* and awful *Efficacy*, which he puts forth in and by it over the Minds and Consciences of Men, working divinely, and leaving Effects of his glorious and omnipotent Power in them and on them. It enters into the *Conscience*, a Territory exempt from the Authority of Creatures, and subject only to the Dominion of God, it challenges, convinces, threatens, awakens, sets it a roring, and the Creation cannot quiet it again. It commands a Calm, and the Sea, that was troubled before, is smooth, and Devils and Men are not able to disturb its Repose. It enters into the Mind, opens its Eyes, fills it with a glorious, clear, pure and purifying *Light*, and sets before it Wonders before unknown, undiscern'd in Counsel and Knowledge concerning God, our selves, our Sin, our Duty, our Danger, and our Relief, the Works, the Ways, the Counsels and Purposes of God. It speaks to the *Will*, converts it, and powerfully disengages it from what it was most engag'd to, what it embrac'd, and was even glu'd to, before; so that no Art or Force of Eloquence, Argument, Fear or Hope could make it quit its Hold: It makes it hastily quit its Imbraces, and turn its Bent another Way, the quite opposite Way, and with open Arms imbrace what nothing could make it look to before, takes away its Aversion, makes it willingly not only go, but run after what it bore the greatest Aversion to before, and obstinately refuse to close with any other Thing: It enters the Affections, makes them rise from the Ground,

Ground, gives them such a Divine Touch, that, though they may through their fickle Nature, be carried at a Time by Force another Way, yet they never rest, but point Heaven-ward: It comes to the Soul, sunk under the Pressure of unrelievable Distresses, sticking in the *miry Clay*, refusing Comfort, and in Appearance capable of none, it plucks it out of the Clay, raises it out of the horrible Pit, sets its Feet upon a Rock, fills it with Joy, yea makes it exceeding joyful, while even all outward Pressures and Tribulation continue, yea are increas'd: It enters into the Soul, lays hold on the reigning Lusts to which all formerly had submitted, and that with Delight, it tries and condemns those powerful Criminals, makes the Soul throw off the Yoke, and join in the Execution of its Sentence against, and on them. Now where the Case is thus stated, how can the Soul, that feels this powerful Word, that comes from the Lord most High, do otherwise than fall down, and own, *That God is in it of a Truth.*

IX. Whereas some may hereon object, "That many, who have for a long Time heard and perus'd this Word, have not perceiv'd this Light, nor felt this Power, and, on this Supposition, seem exempted from any Obligation to believe the Word. I answer.

I. Many who have spent not a few Years in prying into the Works of God in the World, have not discern'd to this Day the beaming Evidence, and clear Declarations of his Glory in them; yet none will hereon say, That they are excuseable, or that Want of an Evidence is chargeable on the Works of God. And why should not the Case be allow'd the same as to the Word? May they not have this Evidence, though Men do not discern it? And may not Men, even on Account of this Evidence be oblig'd to believe them?

No Wonder many discern not this Light, and are not affected with it, since all Men have put out their own Eyes, or impair'd by their own Fault, that Faith or Power of discerning the Voice of God, speaking either by his Word or Works, which our Natures originally had. In many this Evil is increas'd, and this Power further weakn'd by their shutting their Eyes, and Entertainment of Prejudices manifestly unjust against God's Word and Works. Others turn away their Eyes, and will not look to, or attend the Word in that Way wherein God ordains them to attend to it, That they may discern its Light, and feel its Power. And God has hereon judiciously given many up to the Power of Satan to be further blinded. And no Wonder they, whose Eyes the God of

this World has blinded, should not discern the Glory of the Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God shining into their Minds.

III. No Wonder they should not discern this ; for God to this Day has not given them *Eyes to see, Ears to hear, or Hearts to perceive*. It is an Act of Sovereign Grace, which God owes to none, to open their Eyes, which they have wilfully blinded, and where he sees not meet to do this, it is not strange, That they are not affected with the clearest Evidence.

IV. *Light*, however clear, cannot of it self supply the Defect of the *discerning Power*. The Sun, though it shines, cannot make the Blind to see. The *Word* has this *Light* in it, though the Blind see it not ; yea I may adventure to say, That the *Word* of God contain'd in the Scriptures, which he has magnify'd above all his Name, has in it mo, and no less *discernible Evidences* of the *Divine Perfections*, and consequently of its *Divine Original* and *Authority*, than the Works of *Creation*, some of which are sufficient to carry in some Conviction of God in it, even on the Minds of those who are not savingly enlightned, if they attend but to it in the due Exercise of their *rational Abilities*, that is, in such a Manner as they do, or may attend to it, without saving Illumination, laying aside wilful Prejudice, which though it will not be sufficient to draw such an Assent, as will engage and enable them to receive the Scriptures, in a due Manner, to the Glory of God, and their own Salvation, and comply with them ; yet I conceive it will be sufficient to justify against them the *Word's* Claim to a *Divine Original*, and cut them off from any Use of, or Excuse from a Plea of the Want of sufficient Evidence of the *Divine Original* of the *Word*. I nothing doubt, but many of these, who upon Conviction said, *That Christ spake as never Man spake*, were Strangers to saving Illumination, and yet saw somewhat of a Stamp and Impress of *Divinity* in what he said, and the Manner of saying it, that drew this Confession from them, that rendred them inexcusable, in not listning to him, and complying with his Word. And I doubt not, the Case will be found the same as to many, with Respect to the *written Word*, and would be so to all, if they seriously, and without wilful Prejudices, attended to it.

X. I further observe, That to engage to this Assent, it's not requisite, That every one feel all these, or the like particular Effects at all Times, but that the *Word* have this *Power*, and put it forth, as Occasion needs, and Circumstances require it.

Having thus explain'd, we are now to prove our Assertion, " That
" the

“ the Ground whereon we are in Duty oblig’d to believe and
 “ receive the *Word of God* as his *Word*, and not the *Word of Man*, and
 “ whereon all who have receiv’d, and believ’d it in a due Manner to
 “ the Glory of God, and their own Salvation, do receive it thus, is
 “ the *Authority* and *Veracity* of God speaking in and by the *Word*, and
 “ evidencing themselves by that *Light* and *Power*, which is convey’d
 “ into the Soul, in and by the *Scriptures* or the *written Word* it self.

Many Arguments offer themselves for Proof of this important Assertion, which hitherto we have explain’d; some of the most considerable of them I shall shortly propose, without insisting largely on the Prosecution of them, designing only to hint the Arguments that satisfy’d me, That I was not mistaken as to the *Grounds* whereon, by the forementioned Experience, I was brought to receive the Scripture as the *Word of God*.

Arg. I. God ordinarily, in the Scripture, offers his Mind, requiring us to believe, obey and submit to it upon *this* and no other *Ground*, the *Evidence of his own Testimony*. The only Reason commonly insisted on to warrant our *Faith*, oblige us to believe and receive, is, *Thus saith the Lord*.

Arg. II. When *false Prophets* set up their pretended *Revelations* in Competition with his Word, he remits them to the Evidence his Words gave by their own *Light and Power*, as that which was sufficient to distinguish and enable them to reject the false Pretensions, and cleave to his Word, *Jer. 23. 26, ---29. How long shall this be in the Heart of the Prophets that prophesy Lies? that are Prophets of the Deceit of their own Hearts; which think to cause my People to forget my Name by their Dreams, which they tell every Man to his Neighbour, as their Fathers have forgotten my Name for Baal. The Prophet that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream, and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully: What is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my Word like a Fire, saith the Lord, and like a Hammer that breaketh the Mountains in Pieces?* In the latter Days of that Church, when the People were most eminently perplex’d with false Prophets, both as to their Number and Subtilty, yet God lays their *eternal* and *temporal* Safety, or Ruin, on their Discerning aright between his Word, and that which was only pretended so to be. And that they might not complain of this Imposition, he tenders them Security of its Easiness of Performance, speaking of his own *Word* comparatively as to every Thing, that is not so, he says, It is as *Wheat to Chaff*, which may infallibly, by being what it is, be discern’d from

from it ; and then absolutely that it hath such Properties, as that it will discover it self, even *Light, Heat and Power*. A Person divinely inspir'd was to be attended to for no other Reason, but the *Evidence* of the *Word of God*, distinguishing it self from the pretended *Revelations*, and satisfying the Mind about it, by its *Light and Power*.

Arg. III. When further Evidence, as that of *Miracles*, is demanded, as necessary to induce them, that are Unbelievers, to receive and believe the Word, it is refus'd, as what was not in the Judgment of God, needful, and would not be effectual ; and Unbelievers are remitted to the *Self-evidence* of the Word, as that which would satisfy them, if any Thing would. This our LORD teaches clearly in the Parable of *Lazarus* and the *rich Man*, *Luke* 16. 27. to the End. The *rich Man*, being disappointed as to any Relief to himself in the preceeding Verses, is desirous of preventing the Ruin, of his Brethren, and for this End is concern'd to have them induc'd to believe. To which Purpose he proposes, v. 27. the sending of *Lazarus* from the Dead to certify them of the Reality of Things eternal, " I pray the therefore Father, says he to *Abraham*, that thou wouldest send him to my Father's House : " For I have five Brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they " also come to this Place of Torment. *Abraham* saith unto him, They " have *Moses* and the Prophets, let them hear them. And he said " Nay, Father *Abraham* : But if one went unto them from the Dead, " they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not *Moses* and " the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though one rose from " the Dead. Here the Case is plain. The *rich Man* desires a Miracle to satisfy his Brethren. This is refus'd, and they are remitted to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, as what was sufficient. He insists, and thinks a Miracle would be more satisfying. This is still refus'd, and it is plainly taught, That where the Evidence of the Word of God will not induce to believe or perswade, the most *uncommon Miracles* would not do it.

Arg. IV. When the Question is consider'd particularly, 1 *Cor.* 14. what Gifts were most to the Use of the Church, the miraculous Gifts of *Tongues*, &c. or the ordinary Gift of *Prophecy*, or Preaching of the *Word* ; this last is preferr'd, as what was not only more useful for the Edification of *Believers*, but for inducing *Unbelievers* to receive the Word, and submit to it, and the Way wherein it does this, is mention'd, which is no other than by its evidencing it self upon its *naked Proposal*, in preaching by its own Light and Power. Let the whole Passage

Passage be considered from v. 22. but especially v. 24, 25. *But if all Prophecy, and there come in one that believeth not, or unlearn'd, he is convinced of all, he is judg'd of all: And thus are the Secrets of his Heart made manifest, and so falling down on his Face, he will worship God, and report, That God is in you of a Truth.*

Arg. V. The constant Practice of the Apostles fully proves our Assertion. The Way they took to perswade the unbelieving World to receive the Gospel, was not by proposing the Arguments commonly insisted upon now, for proving the Truth of their Doctrine, nor working, nor insisting upon Miracles wrought by them, for Confirmation of the Truth, but by a bare Proposal of the Truth, and a sincere Manifestation of it to Consciences, in the Name God they proceeded, and demanded Acceptance of it, *as the Word of God and not of Man*; and by this Means they converted the World. And when they did refuse it thus propos'd, they shook off the Dust of their Feet for a Testimony against them, and so laid them open to that awful Threatening of our Lord, of Punishments more intolerable then these of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Arg. VI. The Experience of those who do believe aright, confirms it fully. However they may be relieved against the Objections, and capacitate to deal with Adversaries by other Arguments and Means, yet that whereon Believers of all Sorts, learn'd and unlearn'd, lean, is the Word of God evidencing it self unto their Faith, by its own Light and Power. The Unlearn'd are for most Part capable of no other Evidence, and yet upon this alone in all Ages, in Life and Death, in doing and suffering, they have evidenc'd another Sort of Stability and Firmness in cleaving to it, and suffering cheerfully for it, on this Account only, than the most learn'd, who were best furnish'd with Arguments of another Nature, but wanted this, and indeed if this is not allow'd the Ground of Faith, there can be no Divine Faith leaning upon a Divine and Infallible Bottom; and the Vulgar, who are incapable of any other Evidence, must rove in Uncertainty, and pin their Faith upon the Sleeves of their Teachers: But bless'd be God, here is a Ground sufficient to rest on, that will not fail. He speaks, and his Sheep, notwithstanding that Simplicity, which makes them contemptible in the Eyes of the World, know his Voice, hear it, and follow him, and will not hear the Voice of a Stranger.

“Whereas it may be pretended, That on Supposition of what has
 “been now asserted, the People of God, at Times when they discern
 “not this *Light*, feel not this *Power*, have no Ground for their
 “*Faith*, with Respect unto these Passages or Portions of Scripture,
 “which do not thus evidence themselves to be from God, at the
 “Time of their Perusal, or of their hearing of them, by affecting
 “the Believer’s Mind, with a Sense of this *Divine Light*
 “and *Power*. In Opposition to this Objection, and for removing the
 “Ground of it, I offer the following Truth, which afterwards I
 “shall clear, That there is no Part of the Scriptures, *in so far as God*
 “*speaks in them*, but doth thus sufficiently evidence its Authority in
 “its Season, unto Persons capable of discerning it, and duly applying them-
 “selves in the Way of the Lords Appointment, *in so far as they are at pre-*
 “*sent concern’d to receive, believe and obey it*, in Compliance with their
 “*present Duty*, and reach the Meaning of the Proposition in and by
 “the Use of the Means of God’s Appointment.

THIS Objection has sometimes had a very formidable Aspect to me, and therefore I shall distinctly propose, so far as the Brevity design’d will permit, the Grounds whereon I was satisfy’d about the Truth propos’d in Opposition to it, in the following explicatory and confirming Observations, referring for further clearing, as to the Way wherein the Lord quieted me, and relieved me of Objections, to the foregoing Chapter.

I. We are to observe, That *Faith*, or that *Power* in Man, whereby he assents to Truth upon *Testimony*, is corrupted, as well as his other Powers, by his *Fall*. And though in Believers it is renew’d, they receiving an Understanding, whereby they know him that is True, and *know his Voice from that of a Stranger*, yet even in them it is imperfect, and habitually weak, they being renew’d, and so knowing but in Part; as it is with Respect to his other Powers, so it is as to this. And besides this *habitual Weakness*, which engages them to cry to the Lord daily for carrying on the *Work of Faith with Power*, and an Increase of Faith to believe and live to God in a due Manner; besides, I say, this *habitual Weakness* it is liable to various extraordinary incidental Disorders, arising from inward and outward Occasions, while the Believer is here in
 this

this Valley of Tears, subject unto the Miserys occasion'd by the remaining Power of indwelling Corruptions, which are in themselves restless, and raise many Foggs, Damps and Mists to overcloud the Soul: And by the Violence of outward Temptations, which Satan and the World throng in upon him, through the wise Permission of God, for the Excercise of their Faith in this State of Trial, the Darknes is exceedingly increas'd, *Faith* weakn'd, or at least straitned as to its Excercise. And by this Means this spiritual Discerning is sometimes in more, or in less obstructed and darkned. Now if at such Seasons, while the Believer finds himself out of Order thus, he cannot discern this Evidence of the *Divine Authority* of the *Word*, no not where it shines clearest, in so far as to quiet him, he has no Reason to reject the *Word*, question it for Want of *Evidence*, but may be, and ordinarily Believers are exercis'd in Complaints of their own Darknes, as the Cause of their not discerning God in his Word: *Vitium est in Organo*, there is no Fault in the Word, but in the *discerning Power*. The Argument, if it be urg'd with Respect to such a Case as this, would prove, That there is no Light in the Sun.

II. The LORD's People, through the *Power* of Corruption, and *Force* of Temptation, are oft negligent and inadvertent, and do not apply their Minds, nor incline their Hearts unto the *Word*, with the Attention necessary to discern the *Evidence* of God in the Word, and as a Punishment of this, God withdraws, and leaves their Minds under the Darknes they are hereby cast into, and then when God passeth by before, or on the *Right* or *Left-hand*, and worketh round about them, they cannot perceive him. If we turn our Back to the Light, shut our Eyes, or will not be at Pains to remove Motes, or Humors that obstruct our Sight, no Wonder we do not discern the Light. When we have Idols in our Hearts and Eyes, no Wonder we see not God. If we lay not aside the Filthiness of our Hearts, we cannot *receive the ingrafted Word*, that is able to save our Souls, in a due Manner.

III. Although the whole Scriptures come from God, are his Word, yet every Proposition in them contain'd, as it is a Proposition in it self expressive of such a particular Purpose or Thought, is not his Word: For God tells us Mens Words and the Devils Words. Now though God speaks them in so far as to teach, That they are such Persons Words, yet the Propositions in themselves are not to be receiv'd with Faith: But we are only to assent to this upon the Authority of God, That they said so and so, not always that these are true; for oftentimes in themselves they are false and pernicious. Now *Evidence* as to any more than

the *Truth* of God in the historical Narration of them, is not to be expected, nor are the Scriptures to be impeach'd for the Want of it.

4. Albeit every *Divine Truth*, which God speaks, has *equal Authority*, and *sufficient Evidence*, yet every *Scripture Truth* has not a beaming *Evidence*, *equally great, clear and affecting*. The *Scripture* is like the Heaven, another Piece of Divine Workmanship: It is full of Stars, every one of these has Light sufficient to answer its own particular Use for which it was design'd, and to satisfy the discerning and attentive Beholder, That it is *Light*: But yet every one gives not a *Light* equally clear, great, glorious, affecting and powerful; *There is one Glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, another of the Stars: And one Star excelleth another in Glory*, and sometimes the greatest Light, if it is at a greater Distance, like the fixed Stars, affect us less, and shine less clear to us, than weaker Lights, which, like the Moon, are nearer. In the *Scripture*, there are Propositions which tell us Things, which tho' they are in their own Place and proper Circumstances, useful to them, for whom they are particularly design'd, and to their proper Scope; yet they are comparatively of less Importance to us, as acquainting us with Things of less considerable Natures and Use to us, and which lie not so far out of our Reach, being in some Measure known, or knowable without *Divine Revelation*, tho' it was necessary, That in Order to the particular Use to us in our Walk with God, they should be better secur'd, and offer'd us upon the *Faith* of the *Divine Testimony*. Again, there are other Propositions, which hold forth to us Truths in their own Nature of more Importance, that lie further out of our Reach, being neither known, nor indeed knowable by us, without *Divine Revelation*; and which in our present Cases and Circumstances are more nearly suited to our Case, and wherein therefore our present Concernment doth more directly appear to be interest'd, and which therefore impress us with, and leave in us Effects more lasting and discernible. Now it must be allow'd, That the *Truths* of this last Sort have an *Evidence* more bright, great, affecting and sensible, than these of the former Sort.

V. Hereon sundry subordinate Observations offer themselves, which are of the greatest Importance for clearing the Difficulty under Consideration. 1. *Truths* in *Scripture*, or Propositions acquainting us with Things otherwise, in some Respect within our Reach, and only vouch'd by God in Order to the Stability of our *Faith* in them, in so far as we are in Practice oblig'd to lay Weight on them, and to give us not so much Satisfaction as to their *Truth absolutely*, as some additional Security about

about them, those cannot be suppos'd so discernibly to affect our Minds, as *Truths* of another Nature, in as much as this *additional Evidence* is more difficultly distinguishable from the *Evidence* we have otherwise for them. Besides that God seeing that we are not so difficultly to be induc'd to a Belief of them, or so liable to Temptations that may shake our *Faith*, sees it not meet to stamp such *vive, lively* and *affecting Impressions* of himself on them: For it is unworthy of him to do any Thing in Vain. 2. On the other Hand, these Propositions which disclose the secret Purposes, or Knowledge of God, and Things hid in it, that ly within the Reach of no Mortal, or perhaps created Understanding, without *Revelation*, must make a more vivid and lively Impression on our Minds, as illuminating it with the Knowledge of Things, whereto it was, and by its own Reach for ever must remain, a Stranger. 3. In like Manner Truths, wherein our eternal Salvation, or present Relief from incumbent Trouble, is directly concern'd, do more forcibly affect, and have a more powerful Influence, than these which ly more remote from our present Use, of how great Advantage soever in their proper Place they may be. The Moon, which points out my Way in the Night, guides me, and saves me from losing my self or Way, at that Time affects me more than the Light of the Sun, which I have formerly seen, but do not now behold, though the Moon *comparatively* has no Light, and borrows that which it hath from the Sun: In like manner, *Truths* in themselves of less Importance, and which derive all their Glory from those that are more important, yet, when they suit my present Case, affect me more, and their *Evidence* appears greater. *Every Thing is beautiful in its Season.* That there is such a City as *Jerusalem*, or that there was such an one, the *Scripture* tells us: Of this we are otherwise inform'd, and are not likely to be tempted as to its Truth, this however is told us in the *Word*, and this therefore we are to receive on Testimony of the *Word*: But the *Faith* of it is not so difficult, on Accounts mention'd; it is not told but with Respect to some particular Scope, and we have only an additional Security about it. Hereon our Minds are not so illuminate, influenc'd and affected with the Discovery, as when God tells us, he *was in Christ reconciling the World to himself*. The Discovery of this fills us with a Sense of *the Glory of God*, hitherto unknown, and that lay far out of the Reach of vulgar Eyes, or any Mortal to discover, without *Divine Revelation*. And therefore the Discovery affects more. Again, I am perplex'd about *Through-bearance* in some particular Strait, a Promise

mise of Grace to help in it, though it is of less Importance than the fore-mention'd Discovery of Reconciliation, and has no Efficacy, Light or Glory, save what it derives from the former, yet coming in the Season wherein I am wholly exercis'd about it, and the Case whereto it relates, it affects me more. 4. Where the same Truth is at the same Time discover'd by different Lights, it is not easy for Persons, if not very discerning and attentive, to understand the distinct and particular Influence of the several *Lights*, such as that of *natural Light*, *humane Testimony* and *Revelation*; and yet each of them have their own particular Use, which upon its Extinction would appear by the Defect we would feel.

VI. With Respect to *Truths* of *high Importance*, otherwise unknown, which affect our Minds with the enriching Light of Things, by us formerly not known or knowable, and which by the Suitableness to present Circumstances, or Exercise, do more strongly affect with a Sense of the *Divine Authority*, illuminate the Mind, there is no Difficultie, save in the Cases afterwards to be taken notice of, or the like.

VII. As to these *Truths* and *Scripture Propositions* which relate to Things not so remote from our Apprehensions, or are not so suitable to our Circumstances, at present, or discover Things of less Importance to us, it is own'd, That even *real Christians* who have *Faith*, or a *spiritual Discerning* for *ordinary*, are not, upon Hearing or Reading them, struck or affected with so sensible, clear and affecting *Evidence* of God, as they are in other *Scriptures* of a different Nature and Relation, which arises from the Nature of the *Truths* in themselves, the *Manner* and *Design* of God in the Delivery, our present Circumstances, the Weakness and Imperfection of our *Faith*, the incidental Indispositions we are under, and other Causes which may be easily collected from what has been formerly hinted in the preceeding Observations.

VIII. All this, notwithstanding the least considerable of these *Truths*, has a *sufficient Evidence* of the *Divine Authority*, that is, such an *Evidence* as answers the *Design* of God in them, and is able to determine the Believer's *Assent*, and oblige him to obey or submit, and is every Way suitable to the Weight that is to be laid on them, with Respect to the Scope they are mention'd for, and Importance of the Matter; which though at all Times it is not equally discernible, for the Reasons above-mention'd, or others of an alike Nature; yet in its proper Season it is observ'd by judicious, observing and reflecting Christians. As for Instance, when any of these *Truths*, of the least apparent Importance, are
question-

question'd by Satan or Men, then the *Authority* of God is felt to have that Influence and Aw upon the Consciences of Believers, as will not allow them to part with the *least Hoof or Shread of Divine Truth*, and will make them maugre all Opposition, cleave to it, though it should cost them their Life. Likewise when the Spirit of God is to apply these *Truths* to the particular Scope at which he aim'd in asserting them in the Book of God, then not only have they such *Evidence* as influences *Assent* and *Adherence*, but emboldens the Soul to lay that Stress on them, which the Case doth require.

IX. Whereas our present imperfect State and Capacitys, the Nature of the Things, nor other Circumstances allow of an *Evidence* equally clear and great as in other Truths, the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God, in Consideration of this to prevent the Shaking, or at least Failing of our *Faith*, have as to these provided many Ways for our Security, as, 1. Tho' in the particular Passages, such *Evidence* shines not in themselves apart, yet there oft appears a beaming Light, when they are presented in Reference to the Scope intended by God. 2. Other Passages are join'd with them, plac'd near them, and related to them, which have a further *Evidence* of God, and tho' we cannot discern them when they are look'd at *abstractly*, yet when we look to them in *Relation* to these, on which they hang, and to which they are connected, we are satisfi'd. And I conceive there may be an Eye to this, in dropping doctrinal Passages, and Inserting them in Scripture History. 3. This Objection principally respects the *Old Testament*, as to the *Divine Authority* of which we are particularly secur'd by plain and evident *Testimonys* in the *New*. 4. Sometimes with such Truths there are direct Assertions of the LORD's Speaking of them join'd, of which there are many Instances in the Books of *Moses*; wherein it is expressly declar'd, That what was then enjoin'd, was by the particular Command of God. 5. Believers for ordinary, being, in Reading of the Word of God, made sensible of his *Authority*, will not be easily brought to admit of any Suspicion, That a Book wherein God shews himself so evidently concern'd, and owns, as to the Bulk, to be from him, is or can by him be allow'd to be in other Places fill'd up with Propositions, or Matters of a coarser Alloy: And therefore they will rather question themselves, and their own Ignorance, than impeach the *Divinity* of the *Scriptures* on this Account.

X. Tho' no faulty Obscurity is chargeable on the *Scriptures*, as much of them, as in present Circumstances, is of *absolute Necessity* to Believers, in Order to their acceptable Walking with God, being clearly reveal'd,

yet

yet there are many Truths, not understood by all, nor perhaps by any, therein insert, to leave Room for the *Diligence*, Trial of the *Faith* of *Christians*, their Progress in *Knowledge*, and other wise Ends. Now till in the Use of appointed Means, the Spirit of God open to us the Meaning of these *Scriptures*, we cannot perceive the *Light* and *Power* that is in them: But whenever he opens these *Scriptures*, that same *Light* that discovers the *Meaning*, will not fail to affect, and make our *Hearts burn within us*, with the Sense of *Divine Light*, Authority and Power. Of this the Experience of the People of God, as they grow in Knowledge, furnishes them daily with new Instances, and therefore they do not stumble at the Want of the present Sense of this *Light*, but are quickened to Diligence, excited to frequent Crys for opening of their Eyes, that they may understand the Wonders, that by the Knowledge of other Parts of the Word, they are induc'd to believe couched in these Parts, which yet they know not.

XI. As has been before more than insinuate, there are, in *Scripture*, Truths design'd for, and suited to different Persons, in different Circumstances; the Book of God being design'd for the Use of the whole Church, and all in it, in all Stations, Relations, Cases, Temptations and different Circumstances, in which any are, have been in, or may be in. Now when God speaks to one, what he says cannot be so affecting to another, no wise in the same or like Case; though yet he may know somewhat of the LORD's Voice in it. And the same is to be said as to the same Person, with Respect to different Cases.

XII. It must be still minded, that tho' every Part of *Scripture* has in its proper Place and Degree, a *sufficient Evidence* of the *Divine Authority*, yet the *actual Discerning* of it, depends very much upon the *present State* of the *discerning Power* or *Faith* of the Christian, which discerns it or not, or discerns it more or less clearly, as it is most strong or weak, more free from accidental Indispositions, outward Temptations, or more affected by them. And the same is to be said, as to its being more or less intently and orderly applied to the Observation of the *Evidence* of God in the *Word*.

XIII. Yet whereas they, who are once renew'd, do continue still *Children of the Light*, and have a spiritual Capacity of discerning the LORD's Voice from that of a *Stranger*, they do for ordinary, in the *Scriptures*, find the *Authority* of God *evidencing it self* suitably to the particular Exigence of of their particular Cases, where the *Truths* that occur are not such, wherein their present *Faith* or *Practice* is immediately affected,

OR

or where the *Truths* are such as to which, in their own abstract Nature, no more is requir'd save a bare Assent, they being only insert with Respect to some other particular Scope, where the *Truths* are not presently assaulted, where they are not immediately call'd to hazard much upon them, or in other the like Cases they are indeed less affected, but one Way or other, from one Thing or other, as much of God shines in them as is *sufficient* to engage to a present Adherence, and some becoming Reverence as to the *Oracles* of God, which may in their Season manifest their Usefulness to us, and do at present manifest it to others. And where *Truths* are of a different Nature and Importance, and suit present Necessitys, and require more distinct Actings of Faith or Obedience, and we are call'd to lay more Stress on them; in that Case the *Evidence* of God shines more brightly. And scarce ever will a discerning and attentive Christian, who is not grievously indispos'd by some casual Disorder, read the *Scriptures*, or any considerable Part of them, but some where or other, in the Scope or particular Words, and Propositions, or their Contexture, some *Light* will shine in upon the Soul, inforcing a Conviction, *That God is in it of a Truth.*

XIV. When the Faith of the Lord's People is assaulted as to the *Truth* of the *Word*; when in difficult Cases and Dutys they are call'd to lay much Stress upon the *Word*, and hazard as it were their *All*; when they are distress'd with particular and violent Temptations, and need Comfort; when under spiritual Decays, and God designs to restore them; when newly brought in, and need to be confirmed; when they are humble and diligent, and the LORD designs to reward them graciously, and encourage them to go on; when difficulted to find Duty, and waiting on the LORD for Light in Cases of more than usual Importance; when the LORD has a Mind to carry any on to peculiar Degrees of Holiness and Grace, and employ them in special Services; and, in a Word, wherever any extraordinary Exigence requires, then the LORD opens his Peoples Ears, removes what intercepts the Discoverys of his Mind, fixes their Ear to hear, and speaks the *Word* distinctly, powerfully and sweetly to the Soul, and gives them in and by it, such a Taste of his *Goodness, Wisdom* and *Power*, and *Experiences* of his *Authority* in the *Word*, gracious Design and Hand in its Application at present, as fills the Soul with the *Riches* and *full Assurance of Faith, Peace Joy* and *Stedfastness* in *believing.*

“Whereas there are *different Readings* of particular Places in ancient
 “Copies, and Places wrong translated in our Versions, it may be
 “pretended, That we are, or may be impos’d upon, and assent to
 “*Truths*, or rather to *Propositions*, not of a *Divine Original*, casually
 “crept into our Copys of the *Original*, or *Translation*. In answer
 “hereto, the foregoing *Ground of Faith* lays a sufficient Bottom for
 “the Satisfaction of Christians, in so far as their Case and particu-
 “lar Temptations require.

To clear this a little, I shall offer the ensuing Remarks.

I Where the *Authority* of God evidences it self in the Way a-
 bove explain’d, and confirm’d to the Mind, Believers have a stable and
 sure *Foundation* for their *Faith*, whether they use *Translations* or the *O-*
riginals, though it must be allow’d; where Persons are capable of it,
 the *Originals* are most satisfying. And this is plainly the Case, as all re-
 al Christians from certain Experience know, as to all the *Truths*
 of the greatest Importance, and whereon our *Faith* or *Obedience* are
 more immediately or directly concern’d: So that as to these there is no
 Room left for this Objection.

II. The *Wisdom* of God has so carefully provided for the Security
 and Stability of our *Faith*, as to particular *Truths* of any considerable
 Importance, against Pretences of this, or an alike Nature, That our *Faith*
 rests not upon the *Evidence* of one *single Testimony*, but such *Truths* upon
 a Variety of Occasions are often repeated, and our *Faith* leans upon
 them, not only as thus frequently repeated, but clear’d and confirm’d by
 their *Connection* to other *Truths*, which infer them and the whole *Ana-*
logy of Faith, or *Current of the Scriptures*, with Respect to that which is
 the *principal Design* of God. So that we are in no Hazard of being de-
 priv’d of any one *Truth*, of any considerable Influence, in *Faith* or *Practice*
 by pretended Corruptions, or wrong Translation. The famous Dr.
 Owen, who had consider’d the whole various Readings, and well
 knew the Failures of particular *Translations*, observes, That were all
 the *various Readings* added to the worst and most faulty Translation, the
 Church of God would not sustain by it the Loss of one *important Truth*.

III. Where any Person is particularly concern’d to be satisfy’d
 which is the right *Reading* of any particular Passage, and how it ought
 to be translated, they may by the Help of the Ministers of the Gospel,
 such of them as are particularly fitted with Skill in such Matters, & by the
 Endeavours of learn’d Men, who have particularly consider’d every one of
 these

these Passages in a *humble Dependence* on God for the *Blessing* of these *Means*, which the Wise God has multiplied, since Difficulties of this Sort begun to creat any Trouble to the *Faith* of his People; by these Means, I say, join'd with an Eye to the LORD, they may come to be particularly satisfy'd; *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know the Doctrine, whether it is of God.*

IV. Where there is not Access to these Means, which will not readily happen to Persons call'd to such Exercise, which rarely befalls the *vulgar Sort of Christians*; yet the Lord can easily relieve the Person thus exercised by evidencing his Authority to the Conscience in a satisfying Light, or by inabling him to wait for *Light* until the Solution come, or by removing the Temptation, when it becomes too strong, or by leading him to rest in the *particular Truth*, as secur'd by other Passages not question'd, or by some such like Way.

V. The Difficulty as to *Translations* is really of less Importance; and as to the other about *pretended Corruptions*, ordinary Christians, whose Consciences are daily affected with the *Evidence* of God's *Authority* in the *Word*, and his owning it as his Word, speaking by it to them, and conveying *Divine Influences* of *Light, Life and Comfort*, will not fear or entertain any Suspicion so unworthy of God, as, That he could allow the *Word* he thus owns, under a Pretence of his *Authority*, to impose on them Assertions of humane Extract, and of any ill Consequence to their *Faith* or *Obedience*.

VI. I shall only subjoin this one Observation, That Enemys gain more by proposing these pretended Corruptions *in Cumulo*, and in such a bulky Way as to affright *Christians* who are capable of such Objections, than by insisting upon any particular one, and Attempts to prove them of equal *Authority* with the *Reading*, retain'd in the *approv'd Originals*. Their Unsuccessfulness in Endeavours of this last Sort discovers, That there is really nothing of Weight in that so much noised Objection about *various Readings*: For if there were any such *Readings* as could really make any considerable Alteration, and were supported with any Authority able to cope with the *receiv'd Readings*, why do they not produce these? Others are of no Consideration: These only are to be regarded; and of this Sort, there are but very few, that the most Impudent dare pretend: And these few have been disprov'd and disallow'd by Persons of *equal Capacity and Learning*. But to leave this, which is above the ordinary Sort of *Christians*, the LORD's People, to whom he has evidenc'd his own *Authority*, in the Way above-mention'd, will be mov'd with none of these Things. They will not forego the *Word*, but retain it as their, Life and pay Respect to it.

it as the Word of GOD; and they have good Reason to do so. I shall now observe hence,

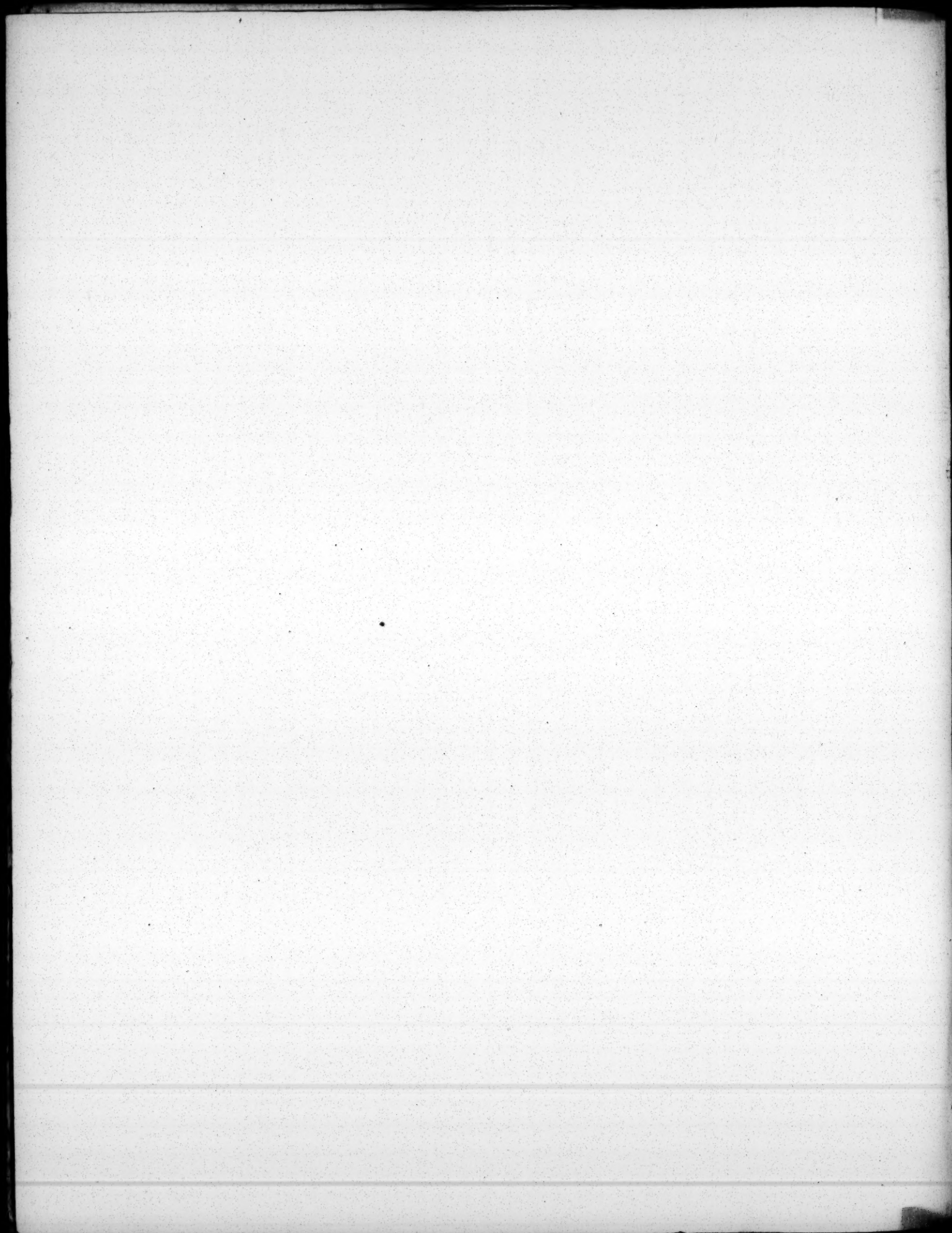
I. How justly *Divine Faith* may be said to be *Infallible*, as standing on an *Infallible Ground*, the *Faithfulness* and *Truth* of God in the Word. Through Darkness we may sometimes not discern, through the Negligence not observe, or thro' the Force of Temptations interposing betwixt us and it, we may lose Sight of the *Evidence of this Authority*; and so our Faith may shake or fail. But while it fixes on this, it cannot fail, tho' we may quit, or by Violence be beat off; the *Ground* is firm, and cannot fail, *the Scriptures cannot be broken*.

II. Hence it is, That the meanest and weakest Believers, who know nothing of the Props others have to support them, do cleave as firmly to the Word, run with all Courage, and as much Cheerfulness, all Hazards for it, to the Loss of whatever is dear to them, Life not excepted, for the Word as the most judicious *Divine*, and oft-times they are much more firm. This is upon no other Grounds accountable. This *Reason of Faith* is as much expos'd to them as to the most learn'd.

III. All Objections arising against this *Ground of Faith*, will be easily solv'd if we consider, 1. That the *Scriptures* are a Relief provided by Sovereign Grace, for those of the Race of fallen Man, to whom God designs Mercy, and so God was not oblig'd to adjust it in all Respects to the natural Capacities of Men in their present State, but it was meet that the Word should be so writ, that Room should be left for the Discoveries of the *Sovereignty* of Grace, and the other Means God design'd to make Use of in Subserviency to the Word. It was not meet nor necessary that all should be so propos'd, as to lie open to Men without the Assistance of the Spirit, and without the Ministry of the Word. 2. The Word was not design'd alone to conduct us, but God has given the Spirit with the Word, who teaches us in & by it, as he sees meet. 3. The Word is design'd to be a Rule to all Ages, and therefore it was not meet or necessary, That what concerns Persons in one Age should be equally expos'd in its Meaning unto other Persons, who liv'd in a different Time. It's sufficient, That in every Age, what concerns that Time, lie so open, that in the Use of the Means of God's Appointment, they may reach that wherein they are concern'd. 4. The Word was design'd for Persons of different Stations, Capacities and Cases, who ought to rest satisfy'd in the obvious Discoveries of what concerns them, in their own particular Circumstances, and is requir'd to be believ'd and obey'd, more particularly in a Way of Duty, of them, tho' they cannot see so clearly what belongs to others in different Circumstances. 5. God has not systematically and separately discours'd all particular Cases under distinct Heads, but to leave Room for the Conduct of the Spirit for exciting the Diligence of Christians to study the whole Scriptures, and for other Reasons obvious to Infinite Wisdom, he has digested them in a Method, more congruous to these wise Ends. 6. The Lord designing the Exercise of the Faith of his own, and to humble them, and to drive them to a Dependence on him, and to punish the Wicked, and give them who will stumble at the Ways of God, somewhat to break their Neck on, he has digested them so, as that there may be Occasions, tho' always without Fault on God's Part, for all those Ends: *Wisdom will be justify'd of her Children*, and to some he speaks in Parables, that seeing they may not see.



F I N I S.



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